University of Alberta

A Study of Ritual Music in a Traditional Ikoots Community: The Mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin

by

Veronica Sofía Pacheco

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Abstract

San Mateo del Mar is one of the *Ikoots* communities located along the Pacific coast in southern Oaxaca, Mexico, between the Inferior and Superior lagoons of the Tehuantepec Gulf. The existing two seasons bring along two strong wind flows that strike the coast from both sides- "the north" and "the south". The sea, the littoral lakes, the water cycles, and the winds, are all being represented in a complex symbolic system as revealed through the rituals the *Ikoots* people perpetuate, and the mythological oral traditions still maintained within the community. Many of the rituals serve to preserve harmony between the water, wind, and the inhabitants of San Mateo del Mar, in which music plays a central role.

This thesis intends to illustrate that by approaching ritual musical performances many features of the *Ikoots* society are unveiled. Thus, these performances become referents of syncretism (synthesis of different beliefs), oral traditions, indigenous identity (inside and outside the community), and a confrontation of different generations of this society with the modern world.

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Note on Terms and Transliteration

Some of the terminology has no equivalent in English. Even where an English equivalent exists, local connotation may differ. Therefore, I decided on keeping the original language for specific terms. To help the reader with the terminology used in this thesis, there are Spanish and *Ombeüts* (local language) glossary sections at the end of the thesis.

The transliterations for *Ombeüts* are based on the one used by Stairs (1981) with some adjustment for the English phonetics, for example I use *h* instead of *j*. The letter ü in *Ombeüts*, corresponds to a guttural iɛ (i as in tr<u>ee</u>; and ɛ as in b<u>e</u>d).

The maliens were monteoks once, but the knowledge is lost in the time, it disappeared in the memory of those that are already gone

(Severo Villaseñor. San Mateo del Mar, 2006)

Chapter I: Introduction

This thesis is a preliminary study of ritual musical performances among the *Ikoots* people, an indigenous ethnic group in San Mateo del Mar, Oaxaca, Mexico. In order to contextualize the practices, this study concentrates on the celebration of the mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin. Through an analysis of these musical performances, many issues of social and cultural process in this society are unveiled. These performances then become referents of syncretism (synthesis of different beliefs), oral traditions, indigenous identity (inside and outside the community), and a confrontation of different generations of this society with the modern world.

The above mentioned issues have often been discussed in Latin American academic discourse. Thus, rather than presenting a revision of each one independently, the development of the theoretical framework has been founded on a deductive process closely attached to the fieldwork data and based on ethnomusicology research paradigm (Chapter III). Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to present a broad picture of the ritual musical practices that represent the *Ikoots* people, as

well as to present my individual experience while applying ethnomusicological methods and techniques.

The data was collected during two fieldwork seasons: July-August, 2005 and January-March, 2006. During the first period I became acquainted with many ritual practices, oral traditions, and the ritual music of four performance groups: 1) *maliens/malinches,* 2) *montsünd naab/opang poh*, 3) the village band, and 3) the rosary worshipers. Even though the latter are not considered musicians, nor are their performances considered music, I included them in the research because some of the prayers are performed with chants. Still, during this period I did not witness the performance within the context of the festivities (only one maliens/malinches rehearsal). Therefore I decided to return in the winter of 2006 for the mayordomía of the Candelaria Virgin.

The *montsünd naab* and the *malinches/maliens* are part of what is known as 'ceremonial groups'. These groups were numerous in previous times, being part of all the festivities in the community. Every adult male was required to belong to one of the 'ceremonial groups' as part of his duties as a member of this community. Today there remain only four of these groups: 1) *monhiür maliens* (malinches dancers); 2) *monhiür das* (snake dancers); 3) *montsünd naab* (those who play the drum) and 4) *monhiür wüx cawüy* (horse riders –knights). Many of the festivities are not practiced anymore and most of the members of the ceremonial groups are elders. The 'ceremonial groups' perform in the main festivities throughout

the year: the festivity of the patron San Mateo (September 18th), the *Mayordomía* for the Candelaria Virgin (February 2nd), and the *Corpus Christi* (depending on Easter dates). Commonly, the instruments from these groups are kept on the altar at the '*Casa del Pueblo*' (communal house) of the village, thus suggesting that these are considered part of the sacred paraphernalia (Fig.16).

Many elements from the 'ceremonial groups' are present in story-telling narratives of the oral traditions I collected, thus suggesting that there is a close relationship between the power of the ritual and the power of the music (Chapter III). The geographical location of San Mateo (Chapter II) has contributed to the construction of a mythology (*monobasic*) depicting the power of natural agents such as winds, floods, and thunders, whose deities are represented and recreated in the practices of musical performances (Chapter III).

Moreover, by observing the musical performances of these four groups, referents to social features and processes of this particular ethnic group come into light. There are still performers who are well acquainted with the musical repertoire and tradition of the music in the rituals. The music is very much related to the phases of the rituals, so the repertoires of each group correspond to its ritual (Chapter IV and Chapter V). Some of these are no longer in practice, yet the knowledge of them is kept in the memory of some. Therefore, the musical performers in *montsünd-naab/opang poh*, *malinches/maliens*, the village band and the rosary

worshipers, are the bearers not only of music as an idioms, but of music as the sonic tradition of this community.

As well, these musical performances are the meeting point between the old and new generation. In the process of maintaining the tradition, the social interaction of these performances and the age differences of the performers unveiled a cultural transformation in this community. Despite the effort of the authorities in enrolling young *Ikoots* into the musical practices, most of the performers are elders.

The performances of some of the groups are considered to be representative of the indigenous identity of San Mateo outside of the community. For instance, the *montsünd naab* and *opang poh* have been playing in folkloric festivals around Oaxaca and abroad. I will argue that in this representation, the practices are taken out of context and thus become something different in the big picture of multicultural Mexico. Larraín (2002) suggests that social identity exists as a result of the interrelationship of social polarities. On one hand are the public spheres, and on the other is personal subjectivity, as represented by the ways of life (2002). This model will contribute to the analysis of the creation of the identity discourse inside the community, in which the performers of 'traditional' *Ikoots* music become icons of the indigenous identity.

Ethnic Group

San Mateo del Mar is one of the four towns containing Huave (*Ikoots)* populations concentrated along the Pacific coast of southern Oaxaca, Mexico, between the Inferior and Superior lagoons of the Tehuantepec Gulf. The Huave population is divided into the towns of San Francisco del Mar, San Mateo del Mar, San Dionisio del Mar, and Santa Maria del Mar. The nomenclature of all these towns demonstrate the influence of the Christian names Saint and the Virgin Mary, plus the suffix '*del mar*' (from the sea), which makes reference to their location.

It seems that "Huave" is a Zapotec term that means "rotten on water", a name which apparently was imposed upon the people of this area (Signorini 1991). The young generation, with the initiative of the authorities of the town, recently started to identify themselves as *"Ikoots"* (we). Since my intention in this work is also, somehow, to represent the voice of the community, this thesis refers to the people of this community as *Ikoots* and the language they speak as *Ombeüts.*

Among the four towns, San Mateo is the largest community of *Ombeüts* speakers. García Souza has mentioned that 98 per cent of Huave speakers from the communities belong to San Mateo (1997). Furthermore, this community has managed to maintain its traditions more than the other three. It seems that the low degree of acculturation is perhaps what has attracted many scholars to the town (Signorini 1991;

Lupo 1997; Millán 2003; García 2003; Cuturi 2003; Hernández Díaz and Lizama 1996; Stairs 1981; and Talle 1994, among others). In fact, San Mateo del Mar has been exposed to social research since the late nineteenth century and with particular continuity since the nineteen-seventies with the Italian Ethnological Mission (Signorini, Lupo, Cuturi, and many of their students). Numerous studies have been undertaken to the point that social researchers in San Mateo have become part of the landscape. Still, there has not been much research related to musical practices.

Based in the structuralism paradigm, Millán (1994, 2003a, 2003b) has conducted studies on the 'ceremonial groups' and the representation of mythological symbols. Andres Oseguera (2001) wrote a thesis on the dance of the maliens/malinches. These works have been of great help to contextualize the case presented here. Nevertheless, the large number of works and the small focus on music outside of Millán and Oseguera's studies was the first motivation for this research. However, upon arriving in the town it was interesting to see that in this semi-urban landscape, many concepts converge, of which ritual music is an important aspect of resident's daily lives. In San Mateo, as in most of Mexico, festivities for the Saints occupied a central place in the lives of the population.

To the eye of the outsider, the sense of religiosity in this town is quite flamboyant. This can be seen on many levels, from the personal houses to the public scenes. For instance, there are household altars in

every dwelling that commonly contain images of saints and photographs of deceased members of the family. Flowers and candles are replaced daily on the altar, while people enter the room and cross themselves and bow their heads towards the altar.

Other interesting features are the series of crosses on the corners of the blocks, which according to the interviewees, are meant to protect and bless the town. Often people come to deposit candles, flowers, and basil, as well as clean up the stations. Similarly, in the east entrance to the town there is a small hut for the feast of the 'Green Cross' –the cross of the fishermen. Throughout the year there are many festivities celebrated to maintain harmony between the environment and the population of San Mateo del Mar.

My intention in this work is to present an analysis of the ritual music used in the Candelaria festivity, together with many elements present in the celebration (based on audio and video recordings). I am aware that there is a limit to the depth to which this work can reach in this subject. Still, I hope it will serve as a documentation of these traditions for the new generations. As well, I anticipate that it will contribute to the research that has been done in this town. Music is a central element in the practice of all the festivities on which this work is centred, and hopefully it will contribute to a missing part of the study of the rites and traditions of the *Ikoots* from San Mateo del Mar.

Chapter II: Geographical-Historical Context and Social Organization

Geographical Description and Social Environment

The geographical and social parameters that characterize the region are essential for the understating of the *Ikoots'* ritual musical performances, and so deserve some elaboration. San Mateo del Mar is located on a sandspit –south of the Tehuantepec Isthmus, Oaxaca, Mexico –that separates the Superior Lagoon and the Pacific Ocean (Fig.1). This geographical location, neighbouring the sea, generates much of the life of San Mateo, which for the most part revolves around water. For generations, this community has based its income on sea resources, and still fishing represents the central activity in the town. The area is abundant in fishing resources, such as shrimps and a variety of fish (*lisa,* bass, among others) that still supply the needs for the community.

The origins of the *Ikoots* people are still unclear, although there are some assumptions that they have come from the south. One theory has been based on Friar Francisco Burgoa's 17th century account that a priest from Nicaragua and an Ikoots-Huave member of the Dominican order were able to understand each other while meeting (Burgoa 1934: 339). In the town there are some oral accounts about the '*caraguas'*, which might suggest a relationship to Burgoa's accounts. Santiago Platas mentioned

that his grandfather, Eugenio Platas (a famous flute player that has passed away), used to tell stories about the '*caraguas*' who came from the south to this land (Platas, personal communication). Furthermore, Gómez Parada states that the 'Huave' or 'Huaris' are originally from Peru (Gómez Parada 2006). Still, there is no concrete evidence for any of these statements (Signorini 1991).

Generally there are two seasons in the area: a pluvial one that extends from June to September, and a dry one that covers the rest of the year. In the rainy season the amount of precipitations gradually fill the existing creeks inside the town, forming natural pools which run east-west (Fig. 2; Fig. 3). In previous years people used to collect shrimps from these pools, but due to the decrease of shrimp resources in the area this is no longer possible. This is also the hot season, and the abundance of water results in a large variety of insects. The dry season is longer, when all the water evaporates from the pools, the temperatures go down, and strong winds hit the town (especially from the north side). The *iünd* (the northern wind) hits the town continuously for days, and even weeks. During this period, fishing becomes a very difficult task, but large amount of shrimps is carried to the coast.

San Mateo is divided into three sections. The second and third are urban for the most part, more than the first, and most of the houses are made of cement bricks. Nevertheless, there are still a considerable number of palm huts. It seems that less than ten years ago most of San

Mateo was composed of palm huts, with mainly one room for the entire family. The kitchen was located in a separate room, commonly with a stove made of mud and used with burning wood. Gradually, the houses have changed and started to be constructed with cement bricks, which gives a semi-urban look to the town.

In every corner of the town there is a cross, located to protect the community. In the centre of the community there is a square, with a basketball court and stalls. Around this square are located all the administrative and public buildings: the municipality, the *Alcaldía*[1], and the church, which represent the three political and religious powers of the town, and a public market.

Economy

Fishing

Ecology surely influences the social and economical development of the community. Perhaps one of the more attracting features of the landscape of the area are the lagoons and the sea, which surround San Mateo (Fig. 3; Fig. 5). For many generations the sea has provided the general income for the community, thus fishing –a men's activity – has become the central economical basis of the town (Fig. 6; Fig. 7; Fig. 8). Generally fishing is practiced in the 'dead sea' (Superior Lagoon) and the

[1] One of the tree authorities of the town.

'live sea' (open sea of the Pacific Ocean). While in the former men commonly catch shrimps, the latter is a rich resource for bigger fish (Fig. 4; Fig. 5; Fig. 10; Fig. 11; Fig. 17).

However, it seems that high demands for fish together with increase in population have produced some changes in the last couple of years. Elias Ochoa, current *Presidente Municipal*, has mentioned that in the last few years the sea resources have diminished and further predicted that eventually the sea will not represent the base for the economical income of the community. By so he implied that people will need to learn some other occupation in order to survive (Ochoa 2006, personal communication). Most of the adults I talked to stated that life was easier in earlier days, since the sea was richer than it is today. Signorini also observed in the 70s this phenomenon of decreasing sea resources from the area (Signorini 1991). However, thirty years later the sea resources are still supplying what the community consume, and in fact, in both occasions I was in San Mateo the fish was never scarce.

Without doubt, fishing still provides the biggest income for most of the families. Nevertheless, the young generations are less involved in the practice. Education in the present represents an important element of daily life in San Mateo. In the community itself there are elementary, junior, and high schools. Additionally, it is quite common to observe junior high school students traveling to schools in Salina Cruz, the closest city, which is located 45 minutes drive from the community.

The enrolment of the young in education leaves them no time for fishing. Many adults have expressed that the young generations are less and less interested in learning about fishing, nor do they get involved or help their parents. Fishing is not an easy routine. When fishing in the 'dead sea', the fishermen generally go and stay outside overnight. They attach their nets to sticks which previously were placed under water and wait the whole night to catch fish and shrimps in their nets. Accordingly, education might serve as an option to develop other skills that will help find other type of jobs inside and outside the community, which in turn can serve as additional options for economical income.

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

The long dry seasons and the high salinity of the soil are both factors that impeded the development of a system of large-scale agriculture in this area. Nevertheless, people do manage to cultivate small amounts of the products that represent the basic diet in Mexico, such as corn (for the tortillas), beans, and some roots such as sweet potato. The corn from this area is about 10 cm. in length and of small grains. It is very common to have fruit trees in the house yards, like *guayaba*, lime, *tamarindo*, coconut palms, *ciruela*, and mango among others.

Most of the trees bear fruits all year long, but during the rainy seasons they produce several times during each month. When the fruits

are ripe, women and children from the family and neighbours pick them up, and with some make sweets by boiling the fruit with sugar and cinnamon (in some cases, and not surprisingly in Mexico, with chilli pepper[2]). There are some vegetables commonly cultivated in the house backyards such as *chayote*[3] and sweet potato. Similarly, people in San Mateo commonly have animals in the back yard, such as sheep and chickens for personal consumption (Fig. 9)

Moreover, most of the families have ranches, consisting of a piece of land for agriculture and animal husbandry, generally located outside the urban part. In these ranches they generally cultivate corn, beans and vegetables. These lands serve to breed big animals like cattle, and horses, as well as, sheep and chickens. Most of the time, a group of skinny dogs are kept to secure the property from predators or thieves. There is no large-scale production of animal and crops around the town. Most of what is produced is consumed by the families themselves; in some cases some produce is sold in the local market. Some of the common products are flowers and fresh basil which serve for the offerings in the church and the different festivities, to visit the home altars, the

[2] In general chilli peppers are an ingredient that goes with every meal in Mexican food. Red and green sauces are always part of any meal. It is very common to find chilli in fruit sweets like mango. This specific one is made by soaking the mangos with lime for a couple of hours, then boiling the fruit with sugar, mango, cinnamon and chilli. It is an exquisite dessert.

[3] This is a green tropical vegetable with the shape of a green tomato. Its texture is similar to a potato but with much more water in it. It is very common to find chayote in the basic daily diet of Mexican food.

cemetery, and offerings made to the deceased during the mortuary vigils.[4] In fact, flowers and basil are part of the details that accompanied all the celebrations in the community. To my surprise, I found that basil is not a spice used for cooking, as it is an important herb believed to have healing powers, and it is an inseparable element of church and any other offerings in the festivities (see Chapter IV).

The Market

In the community the roles of women and men are always separate, as is evident in all the activities around town. If fishing is the duty of men, the market is surely women's territory (Fig. 20). The fish that is not consumed by the family is brought for sale to the local market. Like others in Mexico, this market also contains a variety of plants, fruits, vegetables, meet, local food (a lot of fish), tortillas, and bread, among other things. Most of the women who come to the market are local, with a few exceptions.

There are a few women that maintain their own business outside the community, by buying and selling fish and shrimps. Thus, they become intermediaries between the fisherman from the town and the big traders in the big cities like Oaxaca and Mexico City (Fig. 21). As

[4] When somebody dies there is the custom of staying with the corpse for one night, during which family, neighbours and friends will have the opportunity to say goodbyes. All the people will bring offerings such as *atole* (hot beverage made of cooked corn), flowers, and bread among others. Basil always accompanies all the offerings.

mentioned, gender roles within the community are always separate, therefore it is unlikely to see men involve in the business, even though most of the time it requires a lot of physical effort to transport heavy loads of fish when selling outside the community.

Many women have told me stories about their experiences while going to sell fish and shrimps outside the community. Berta Zepeda, with whom I developed a close friendship, is an example of women that run their own business (Fig. 19). She told me that she has been trading fish around the closest towns since early age. At the beginning she was accompanying her mother and sisters, until gradually she became an independent seller and started a business of her own (Berta Zepeda 2005-06, personal communication) (Fig. 21). At the moment, she supports her family, has two children going to junior high in Salina Cruz and Juchitan, and one girl going to the local kindergarten; they have a truck, and are building the house (Fig. 18). Her husband, although he is not directly involved in the business of selling the fish, always helps her to collect the money and to prepare the loads for transportation. Even though she transports tones of shrimps and fish, Berta tends to travel alone, or sometimes with one of her sons when they are not at school. Besides selling products from the sea there are also other products that are brought from the outside. Among those products are flowers, candles, and basil. It is typical to see many women from San Mateo selling these commodities in festivities of the surrounding towns.

Local Bars

Another local income source is the *cantinas* –local establishments which sell alcohol, mostly mezcal.[5] The number of *cantinas* around town is impressive, as well as the number of drunkards that populate the streets all of the time. Mezcal is an alcoholic drink used during festivities, but it seems that it became an inseparable element of some men's daily life in San Mateo. Generally women are seen consuming mezcal only during festivities.

Weaving

Weaving is yet another interesting feature that serves as an economic income for many families. The common technique of weaving in San Mateo is the blackstrap loom, which is tied around the weaver's waist on one end, and on the other to a tree, a post, or some other object that can support the tension (Fig. 26; Fig. 27). The most common weaving type are the *Servilletas* (napkins), a cloth that covers most of the things that women carry in containers, like groceries from the market, flowers for the cemetery, or offerings, fish, etc. (Fig. 31).

[5] Mezcal is an alcoholic drink distilled from the sap of an agave.

The weaving, a women's activity, is a tradition which has been kept for many generations. Before the introduction of industrial textiles, most of the textiles in San Mateo were handmade. This type of weaving represents one of the most characteristic cultural features of the community, which has been representing the community in Mexico at large as well as abroad (Fig. 22).

Most of the women in San Mateo know how to weave, although there are few that have developed special techniques and types of weaving that have been largely recognized. One of those is Justina Oviedo (Fig. 28) and her daughters, whose 'round-double-sided' weaving is displayed in the National Museum of Anthropology and History in Mexico City (Fig. 30). Justina and her daughters have founded the 'weavers' atelier', a series of workshops to teach weaving techniques to women of the community (Fig. 23). This project has been funded by governmental organizations, allowing them to buy material for the construction of looms as well as thread[6] (Fig. 25).

Interestingly enough, the traditional designs sometimes represent not just the common flora and fauna of the area (Fig. 31), but also images related to the mythological lore that appears in rituals and oral traditions. The most common design is the snake, which is related to the stories and beliefs on *nahuales* (see Chapter III) (Fig. 29).

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[6] It is unlikely that men will be involved in the weaving, since it is a women's work. However, Hugo Hidalgo, who is a student in one of the high schools of the community, has been learning the weaving techniques in the workshop. He states that he is learning a tradition that belongs to his cultural heritage, even though this has been a practice kept to the women spheres.

Social Organization of the Ikoots

San Mateo's social organization is still partially based on what is known as *"usos y costumbres"*, also referred to in the English literature as *cargo* (position) system, which is commonly found in all over Mesoamerica. This is a religious-civil hierarchy system in which duties are assigned to the male community members without a salary. Thus, the whole political organization, from top to bottom, functions with rotating positions amongst the male members above the age of 18. Partially, this type of system is inherited from the religious one established by the Dominicans.

Generally, each stage in the system takes about two to three years. When the age is appropriate to enter the system (18 years old), initiates occupy the bottom position commonly known as *topiles* (police). When the responsibilities are completed, (which in many cases could occur more than once), they advance to the next level. Therefore, traditionally the authorities, who represent the highest position, have been elders who have committed to and served in all the stages, have a complete understanding of the system, and for that matter, a better understanding of the community needs.

There is a general assembly, composed of male representatives above the age of 18 from each family of the town. The assembly chooses

the candidates (among themselves) and elect their authorities. Underage members are allowed to take part in case they are married and have children, which may show that the person is responsible enough. This assembly is also hierarchical: the elders are the respected ones whose decisions are more influential. No women are allowed to be present in the assembly, or become part of the system. In the political organizations, religious and civil entities exhibit the same structure, each but each has a hierarchical system of its own.

The authorities in San Mateo del Mar are constituted by two types of *cargo* civil and religious: the civil *cargo* is represented by the *Alcadía*, and *Ayuntamiento Municipal* [7]; while the religious cargo is represented by the Church. All three entities are articulated in all of the rituals: in the celebrations of ceremonies for saints and *mayordomías*. Not long ago all the members of the authorities were elders, who after passing through all the duties that the community required, were considered respectable enough and ready to lead the community. This is still applicable to the *Alcaldía* and the Church authorities, but with respect to the *Ayuntamiento Municipal*, things have changed in the last ten years.

In the modern world, the community confronts the needs of the new generations and the interaction with the world outside the community. Therefore, a person who understands Spanish well and the community dealings internally and externally, will be more suitable to lead the

[7] I could not find parallels in English for these terms. See glossary for the function of the entity inside the community.

community. Thus, several members who have received education and have become professionals, were elected for *Presidente Municipal* and different positions in the *Ayuntamiento* Municipal, without being an elder. The current *Presidente* Municipal is the Doctor Elias Ochoa, who at the time of the research was 45 years old.

The lack of enrolment of elders in the position of the *Ayuntamiento Municipal* suggests a change in the cargo system. In fact, the *Ayuntamiento* Municipal has an administrative function, and is in charge of the management and development of the infrastructure of the town, including the construction of schools, roads, hospitals, etc. This entity is the only one that has established a system of salaries for its members, and has created a different concept of elections. In the last governments, they even have received help from political parties such as PAN, PRI, PRD, etc., for the promotion of candidates.

The Church

The Roman Catholic doctrine was first introduced to the area by the Dominicans, who came with the Spanish Conquest during the 16th century. These monks established large ranches and *cofradías*[8], and delegated *mayordomos* to administrate them. As part of a process of secularization, the Dominicans left the community at the end of the XIX

[8] The *cofradías* were religious groups who gathered together under common interest to worship a saint. Similar in nature are the *mayordomías*, but in San Mateo the latter is the more important.

century. It is only around 1960 that the 'Oblate' order came again to San Mateo with missionaries (Signorini 1991).

Currently, there are in San Mateo Catholics, Evangelic, Jehovah Witness, and Pentecostal churches; still most of the population are Roman Catholics. Despite the presence of these other Christian churches in the town, the Catholic Church is the only one that represents any political power. My intention here is not to present an overview of the religious affiliations in the town, but rather a general overview of the social organization of this community, in which the Catholic Church has still a central role.

The church building was constructed by the Dominicans in the XVII century (Lupo 1997), and represents an important part of the daily life of the community. For instance, it hosts all the sacred images which are the center of devotion in all the festivities for the Saints, the Virgin, the Holy Cross, etc, which are central in the life of the community. Similarly there other practices like the daily morning prayers, the baptisms, and funerals, among other. Evidently, the practices maintained are influenced by the ones established by the Dominicans since the 16th century.

The hierarchical cargo system of the Church, in contrast to the civil system, starts when the members are of young age. Thus, children are offered by their parents to the service of the Church, who become *monaguillos* in the course of learning the prayers and becoming acquainted with devotional duties and liturgical materials, such as prayers

and singing. The structure of the Church starts with the head, the *Maestro de Capilla*, followed by two *Fiscals*, *Sacristan*, *topiles* and *monaguillos*. All members of the Church, including the authorities, reach the status of *rezadores*[9] once they acquire the knowledge concerning all the practices of the Church.

The Alcaldía

This organization is formed by the First and Second *Alcalde*, and three substitutes. They are responsible for the spiritual and moral guidance for the community, as well as for judgment of violations of the law. The First *Alcalde* was the most important authority in the community. Its function was to provide moral and spiritual guidance to the community. Traditional the *Alcalde* was considered the higher authority in the community. However, due to the administrative duties of the *Presidente Municipal* outside the community, the latter, has become the higher authority. Still the Alcalde occupies the first positions in the celebration of rituals.

[9] In literature these are also referred as 'kantores' (Signorini 1979: 104; Millán 2003: 32). Nevertheless, throughout this fieldwork they are identified as 'rezadores'.

Presidencia Municipal

This entity is in charge of the administrative duties inside and outside the community. It is constituted by the *Presidente Municipal*, *Sindico*, a group of *regidores*[10], and *topiles*. They are responsible for the management, administration, and the development of the infrastructure in the town. Among their duties is the administration of the economic funds coming from the government.

Other Groups

Part of the social organizations of the community are the 'ceremonial groups', which are constituted by men. It seems that in previous times every male member of the community had to commit to one of the 'ceremonial groups' as a commitment, which were taking part of the rituals in the festivities. When the member was committed to one group, he was not allowed to belong to another. Many of these groups have disappeared, and today have only four remain: *monhiür maliens* (malinches dancers), *monhiür das* (snake dancers), *and montsünd naab and monhiür wüx cawüy* (horse knights)

[10] I could not find a parallel in English for this term.

Geography and the 'Culture of Water'

Even as the town gradually becomes more urbanized, and despite the fast acculturation with the Zapotec culture, the community in San Mateo manages to keep its genuine idiosyncrasy. Unquestionably, its geographical location explains why the large corpus of mythological lore and beliefs would be related to water. Water, as a vital element, is the source for the welfare of the community, who not only ask for enough water for the crops, but at the same time to control the amount of water and avoid inundations. These are themes that are being represented in all of the ritual practices the *Ikoots* perpetuate.

Some examples of these rituals are the daily morning prayers (rosary prayers), and the celebration of festivities such as the *cofradías* and *mayordomías*. Generally speaking, most of the ritual practices are a heritage of the Catholic doctrine, but at the same time, also carry with them many elements which seems to be non-Christian. For instance, every morning before sunrise (3:00 or 4:00am), the church's authorities, together with a choir of female worshipers, gather in church to pray the rosary. One of the reasons for these gatherings is to ensure enough rain. Elias Ochoa mentioned that once the practice was cancelled: then the rain stopped, until the practices were retaken. Elias replied that as a doctor, he cannot subscribe to the idea that these prays may influence natural cycles. Still, as the *Presidente Municipal* of San Mateo he believes in re-

implanting the practices, to keep the order and respect among the community and their beliefs (Ochoa 2006).

It is interesting to note in this event, that there are still concepts which are represented in the practices which have been maintained for generations. This can be seen in people's need to perpetuate the ritual of the rosary in order to have rain. Even for the new generations, as Elias Ochoa, whose education does not let him to share the same belief, still he respects the principles and beliefs that belong to the culture from where he comes from.

The inseparable element that accompanies all the practices is music. Yet, in the existing literature about the community there is no discussion about the role of music in the rituals. If it is believed that there is an intrinsic relationship between the prayers and natural agents such as rain, then what is the power that music carries in order to maintain it? Broadly, what does music represent in this community that will explain the need to perpetuate the musical practices? As has been explained before, this is a society with rigid divisions of gender roles. To what degree does apply to music practices? Who are the musicians and how and why they have been learning the musical language? What can be said about the music performances that will reflect other social practices? In this confrontation of traditional and modern world, can the age of the musicians suggest a broader pattern of society by facing an inner social

change? These are all questions that I will try to address in the following chapters of this thesis.

Chapter III: Methodological and Theoretical Framework

Before sunrise, at 3:00 AM and half sleepy, I hasten to keep up with the fast-walking pace of Pascacio Zepeda. When getting close to the church, the authorities are already there, ringing the bells and calling for the morning prayers. Pascacio and his grandson enter the gates of the atrium, cross themselves, and bow in front of the big cross located at the entrance on the right side of the gate. As a sign of respect, they bow to the authorities; the *Maestro de Capilla, Fiscal* and the *Sacristan*, pronouncing "*teat*" (sir), and then enter the church. On the left side there is an altar with some big crosses standing beside it, to which they bow. Close to the main altar there are two rows of images on the left and right aisles where, in the complete darkness, Pascacio starts lighting the candles and changing the flowers. I sit aside until the worshippers start to come. Around 4:00 AM the women's choir is arriving, the bells ring again, and the chanting starts. Then I go and sit in the back, so as to not to disturb the praying.

This is an example of one of the performances that I attended as part of my endeavour to gain new insights into the musical aspects of the rituals for the Candelaria Virgin. While observing the rituals, I noticed that there is a strong relationship between themes in the stories from the collected oral traditions, and some elements represented in the ritual musical performances. This leads me to suggest that there is a strong correlation between the power of the ritual and the power of music, in their

mutual attempt to maintain the delicate balance between the community and the natural (wind and water cycles) and supernatural (*monbasüik*[11]) forces. Before investigating the details of this correlation, however, we must first define the nature of this study. As this paper applies an ethnomusicological fieldwork methodology, a description of the methods used in collecting the data is pertinent for a broader understanding of the research.

Fieldwork Techniques

What I have learned in this experience is a result of interacting in the community, attending the rituals, learning the music idioms, and interviewing and discussing the topics with the informants. In collecting the data, I have applied fieldwork techniques such as: participant and passive observation (DeWalt and DeWalt 1992), making audio and video recordings, writing field notes, and conducting interviews (Jackson 1987; Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995).

[11] *Monbasüik* are deities who belong to the pantheon of the *Ikoots*' mythology. See bellow for detailed explanation, and glossary.

Participant Observation

Among all of the fieldwork techniques mentioned above, participant observation has been one of the most interesting strategies in learning about the musical performances from the rituals, so it deserves special attention. Participant observation is a qualitative fieldwork method largely used by anthropologists. It consists of the involvement of the researcher in the activities of the people under study. Thus, the former learns while practicing the ways of life of the latter. This has been an important tool in the development of the work of many scholars (Malinowsky 1961; Friedson 1984).

In ethnomusicology, this technique is an indispensable tool in the field. However, due to the nature of the discipline (which deals with musical performances), it has reached other dimensions. Qureshi, while applying participant observation, has proposed that social integration of researchers and their human subjects results from practicing music. Thus, ethnomusicology may become a strategy for integrating diverse parts of a multicultural society in Canada. "Doing research is praxis, and so is music making" (Qureshi 1994: 347).

In the case here, I found it interesting to learn the musical language in order to experience the manner in which this tradition is transmitted. Hipólito Esesarte, one of the *rezadores*, committed to frequent meetings to

teach me how to sing the rosary. While becoming acquainted with the repertoire, I also came across a number of books used by the *rezadores*. Many of them were hand-written copies from others, which apparently were again copies of previous ones. In some cases, the copies were more than fifty years old. These copies are an attempt by the Church members to preserve the books. Many of the books contain whole repertoires of chants for different occasions, as well as several different series of guides for religious practices. Still, I did not see any music score and in fact, Hipólito does not even read Western music notation. The melodies of the prayers have been transmitted orally through generations.

By practicing the chants from the rosary, I became acquainted with many repertoires which, outside of this framework, would have otherwise gone unnoticed by me as music that is not even performed anymore. Similarly, I learned few of the *sones* from the flute performers Apolinar Figueroa and Ricardo Carvajal, members of the *montsünd naab*. For this group there is nothing written: no books, notebooks or pamphlets. Their entire repertoire has been, and still is transmitted orally. Thus, by becoming a participant observer and learning the musical idioms, understanding the concept of oral traditions in this case becomes a personal experience. Here is an example in which ethnomusicology becomes the meeting point between theory and practice.

Defining the Environment for the Development of the Fieldwork

One of the more important issues that arise when looking for an appropriate methodology for the development of fieldwork is the importance of understanding the social interactions in the community. This understanding can only be reached through the ethnographer coexisting with the people being researched. In the case presented here, it was very important to establish personal relationships in order to access information and learn the musical practices. In this manner, fieldwork becomes an experience of learning through interacting with the community. To help explain the nature of the study's methodology, the following are some depictions of situations that contributed to the establishment of the appropriate methods for the research.

To avoid misunderstandings towards my presence in the town, my first step upon arriving in San Mateo was to visit the authorities and explain the nature of the project I intended to conduct. Therefore, although I had to wait almost eight hours, I considered it pertinent to meet with the *Presidente Municipal,* Dr. Elías Ochoa before getting around the town. Following my explanation of the goals of the research, he signed a letter authorizing me to proceed. By then it was already evening and without any hotels or motels in the town, I finally ended up renting a room in the house of the Zepeda family, who have been hosting anthropologist since the

1970s. In the following days I visited the *Alcaldía* and the authorities from the Church.

San Mateo is not a tourist town, so a foreigner is always a very distinct feature. In fact, in my first trips throughout the surroundings, I constantly heard the word *moel* (foreigner) buzzing. While gaining insight into the ways of life around the community, and becoming acquainted with some social standards, I eventually began to learn how to interact with the people, speak some of the language, and gradually started to identify my informants.

Even though most of this experience was satisfactory and productive, sometimes, I confronted difficult situations. Several times I had to decide between maintaining my personal affiliations and *habitus,* or accepting the community's lifestyle. For instance, when I started visiting the informants and they had accepted my presence, they welcomed me by offering food. On many occasion there were dishes that contained meat. As a vegetarian, it was a difficult task for me to explain why I could not accept the food.

In a community with a low income such as San Mateo, sometimes offering meat to a visitor might represent a gesture of special consideration. This raises an important question: how far is the ethnographer willing to accept changes in order to adapt him/herself into the hostess culture? In the case presented here, with time, some of the *Ikoots* people started to know me better, accepted me (not being offended

when I did not eat), and sometimes even prepared special dishes for me without meat.

Certainly, a good interaction draws boundaries which might help in the process of communication among the participants. While the ethnographer learns from the surroundings, the people also learn from the ethnographer. This does not remove the cultural differences that might exist between ethnographer and informant. But, at least it might contribute to the development of a friendly relationship which, in the end will be an important factor towards the development of the fieldwork.

In general, it was easy for me to interact socially with the members of the community since I come from a similar cultural background. Even though I am a *mestiza* Ecuadorian from the Andean highlands, there are some features that draw me near to the people from San Mateo, an indigenous community in southern Oaxaca, Mexico. Most of Latin America shares certain cultural traits: cultural diversity from the different indigenous communities and the *mestizo* population, and syncretic traditions that have resulted from the amalgamation of local practices and Catholicism, which came with the Conquest during the 15th and 16th centuries. Additionally, being a Spanish speaker definitely brought me closer to the community, although I did experience some difficulties from not speaking the local language.

Certainly, coming from a similar cultural background contributed to the establishment of good relationships and proper conditions in the

development of this research. However, this proximity also created some difficult situations of another kind. During both of my visits to the town, I lived with the same family, with whom I became emotionally involved. Due to the family's comfortable acceptance, I started to input my personal convictions. One of the most difficult examples I had to face was when Johan, a three-year-old child from the house, was being punished. Somehow, it seemed to me that the punishment meted was sometimes too hard for a little boy of that age. So on one occasion, I stood in his defence and tried to stop the punishment. This caused a very unpleasant situation with his mother and the owner of the house, his grandmother.

The above mentioned account reflects that my presence among the family was sometimes intrusive as I was taking a position and judging the manner in which the child was educated. Although I believe the ethnographer should try to become an un-intrusive agent in the social environment while conducting fieldwork; this is perhaps an overly-idealistic notion, I could not stay without taking action. To distance myself from the dynamics of the family was sometimes a good alternative to maintain a good relationship with its members. In the case of not finding a space to be alone while working, I opted to go for a few days to the closest cities of Salina Cruz and Tehuantepec.

My relationship with the hostess family created a link to the *mayordomos*, who are relatives. This further allowed me to participate in many rituals in the mayordomía that were not exposed to the general

public. As it will be shown in Chapter IV, there are two spheres in this mayordomía; one private and one public. Without the proper acceptance of the *Ikoots* people, it is almost impossible to enter the private sphere. Besides being very colourful and attractive to the eyes of outsiders, the rituals in the community more importantly represent the beliefs of those who practice them. Therefore, a delicate balance exists between the performance of the rituals and the contact of the community with the outsiders who come to the town to participate in the mayordomía.

Money

Another issue I confronted while establishing the appropriate relationship with the *Ikoots* people was money. Definitely, establishing friendly relationships is better than paying informants. I believe this does not guarantee that the information is more reliable than when paying for it (or the opposite), but at least it removes the unpleasant issue of dealing with money. My original intent from the beginning of the project was to remunerate the informants for the time they spent in the research. However, on many occasions upon my offering of money, the people become suspicious and questioned the nature of the fieldwork. At other times it was difficult to establish the rates for payments. Without any monetary agreement, I could never interview specific informants.

Consequently, it was easier to visit the informants through bringing presents such as fruit or bread in order to obtain information. Many times, I was asked for money. But after making my objectives clear to them, my relationship with the informants became more dynamic and comfortable for all parties involved. Sometimes I did not succeed in establishing clear guidelines regarding payments for visits, in which case I preferred to find different sources. Luckily enough, with the key informants there was never a need to confront the money issue.

In fact, I was lucky to find many people ready to receive me in their houses. My most valuable experience came through being hosted by informants, with whom I quickly became friends. My relationships with Severo Villaseñor, the violin player from the maliens/ malinches; Justina Oviedo, of the weavers; Hipólito Esesarte one of the *rezadores*; Berta Zepeda and her family; Jesus Angel Escudo, and Hugo Hidalgo, are all examples of the success of developing associations not based on the exchange of money. Still, due to the degree of their contribution to the research, and regardless of the difficulties in offering money, I wished to pay some of the informants: so I did.

The last issue to address here is the confrontation of gender interactions in the community. As a young female ethnographer who is alone without a man, I quickly became the target of insinuations and even propositions while visiting informants or attending performances. Most of the performers were men and to avoid unpleasant situations, I opted to

bring friends to some of the interviews as well as to the performances. As it will be shown in Chapter IV, the roles of the female and male spheres are always separated.

Language

Not speaking the local language can be a difficult hurdle to overcome when conducting research. Even though in the short time I spent in the community I managed to learn enough *Ombeüts* (the local language) to get myself around the market, it was never enough to communicate with informants who spoke little or no Spanish. In fact, many of the performers were elders and some of them spoke very little Spanish. Therefore, it was necessary to work together with people from the town interested in collaborating with the project. Hugo Hidalgo, Jesus Angel Escudo, and Jesus Quintero on many occasions aided me as translators during interviews. They also translated collected interviews and oral traditions at my request. Their contribution and comments have been invaluable and a key input into the research.

Furthermore, a Huave dictionary created by Glenn Albert Stairs (1981) in collaboration with Emily Scharfe, his wife and some people from the village (Proceso Olivares, Tereso Ponce and Lorenzo Comonfort) has been an important tool to compare definitions I have gathered, as well as suggestions for spellings. Since there is no logical translation for some of

the terminology concerning the ritual and the musical groups, I decided to keep some of the terms in *Ombeüts*.

Historical and Anthropological Resources.

Historical and anthropological resources have provided an historical and social context for the music in the rituals and in the social interactions. Since many of the publications in Mexico have not been translated into English, I dedicated some time at the beginning and at the end of the season to visit libraries and archives in Mexico City, Oaxaca, Tehuantepec, Salina Cruz, and Juchitan.

This community has been an attraction for scholars from different parts of the world. From the Roma University in Italy, Italo Signorini, Alejandro Lupo, and Flavia Cuturi, among other scholars and their students, have been visiting San Mateo del Mar since the early 1970s. Scholars from such as Berkeley Cheney (1968); and Mexican scholars, such as Saul Millán, represent some of the names who have been visiting and working in the community. Part of their input in the community also helped me in the development of the project.

Furthermore, meeting at the beginning of the season with scholars who have been working in the town gave me a good reference for my first visit. Saul Millán, from the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH) in Mexico City, provided me with contacts, some of whom became key informants in the course of the research. In the summer of 2006 I had

the opportunity to meet with Flavia Cuturi, a scholar who has been working in San Mateo for almost thirty years.

Theoretical Framework

In social research there have been many approaches to the study of religious rituals. In a sense, the various alternatives have been drawn from the personal interest of the researcher in identifying cultural traits in the rituals of the social group being studied. Then, rituals become the cultural referent to social structures –Turner observing in the *liminality* and *communitas* patterns of social interaction (Turner 1969); or mechanism for regulations in the interaction of the community with their environment (Rappaport 1967). Also based in Levi Strauss' structuralism paradigm, some anthropologist have worked with the system of symbols present in rituals and identified social organizations among the community of San Mateo del Mar (Millán 2003a, 2003b; Oseguera 2001)

In the field of ethnomusicology, some scholars examine the manner by which ritual musical performances generate cultural and social processes. For instance, Frishkopf describes the ritual performance (hadra) as a strategy of adaptation of a traditional practice (tariqa) into the Egyptian modern society (Frishkopf 1999). In his study of the Suya community in Brazil, Seeger, within the paradigm of musical anthropology, explores the identification, definition, and cultural representation of the community through ceremonial musical practices, which are part of daily

life in the community (2004). Certainly, as in the case here, many of these works have contributed to the development of the proper theoretical framework for the interpretation of data. Still, none of them provide for the conditions of the present case. Therefore, creating the theoretical framework here has been a deductive process, combining different elements such as: a) my own personal affiliations and observations; b) the expressions, interpretations and representation of the *Ikoots* people themselves; and c) the experiences and expertise of other scholars.

My motivation for seeking to understand the music in the rituals at San Mateo del Mar is that I believe that many of these ritual musical performances may reveal features of this society and its cultural process. Through observing social interactions by focusing on the performances for the Candelaria Virgin at the mayordomía, the concepts of syncretism, traditions vs. modernism, and ritual and oral traditions, all converged. The sonic value of the ritual music represents the people who identify with it, and validates its practice. Therefore, the performances are indicative of the social process inside the community, as well as its continuous struggle in confronting modern Mexico.

One of the interesting features of dealing with rituals is that the cosmovision of the community might come into view. Behind the power of a ritual stands the power of the faith of those who practice the rituals in order to fulfill personal and communal needs. In the case here, I will show that in San Mateo del Mar, rituals and ceremonies are perpetuated in an

effort to maintain the balance between the natural agents (winds, thunders, rain and the sea), the natural resources (especially the products that come from the sea) and the life in the community. Then the concept of magic comes into the imaginary and cultural representations, which are present in the musical practices

The power of the rite is translated in an attempt by the community to equate the complex devotional duties with the necessary fundamentals. As will be shown in Chapter IV, one of the central elements common in all the rituals is offerings. In the mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin, the central characters are the mayordomos, yet the whole community participates (See chapter IV). Therefore, rituals become the communal recognition of a tradition that has been carried throughout generations by means of constant practice; and at the same time are the idiosyncratic representations of community beliefs.

Syncretism

While attending the rituals at the *mayordomía* for the Candelaria Virgin, syncretism instinctively came into my mind. There were many elements that suggested their Christian heritage, but at the same time there were others that did not. For most places in Latin America, after Christianity arrived with the Spanish Conquest, the practice of Catholicism embodied a blending and adaptation of the European religion with

traditional local practices. The Catholic doctrine spread throughout all of Latin America; even to the most isolated indigenous communities.

Syncretism has been one of the most polemic issues under debate in post-colonial theory (Stewart and Shaw 1994). Many of the concerns raised have centered on the fact that syncretism has served as an epithet to describe third world cultures, in which hegemonic forces of conquerors imposed the practices (1994).

Nevertheless, in Mexico, syncretism was key to many of the analyses of cultural practices regarding the alliance with, and adaptation of Catholicism to the local practices. For instance, the famous Virgin of Guadalupe, a Mexican national icon, has been considered an important case of syncretism because she portrays symbols of both beliefs: the indigenous and the Catholic (Brading 2001; Lafaye 1974, among others). Thus, my intention here is to use the concept of syncretism by examining the rituals at the mayordomía as the combination and adaptation of different representations of beliefs of two religious practices: Catholic and non-Catholic.

In San Mateo del Mar, *la costumbre* (the tradition) is central in the life of the community. This *costumbre* constitutes all of the religious celebrations surrounding the Christian dates, such as the Corpus Christi, saints, the cross, and the virgin festivities. Still, these religious practices are also combined with other ritual celebrations. For instance, in the case presented here, the Virgin is certainly the subject of veneration in the

Christian faith. Still, the elements present in the *mayordomía*; such as offerings, processions, household altars, special food (*chaw poposh*, chocolate, mezcal), and the performances of the musical and dance groups, portray indigenous practices. In fact, these are the elements that give a distinct appearance to the practices celebrated in San Mateo.

Furthermore, on these Catholic dates, the central element in the celebration of rituals is related to water. While there are rituals performed to request rain (the daily rosary prayers from the mornings or the sea procession with the authorities and images of the saints and the Virgin), there are others that look to restrain the amount of water and avoid inundations (the ritual dance *omalndiüc* –snake head – in the celebration of the Corpus Christi) (Signorini 1991; Lupo 1997; Millán 1993). Additionally, in the practices the sea is central and represents a sacred entity for the community. In this complex representation of the *costumbre,* the present elements of syncretism have been maintained throughout generations and transmitted orally.

Oral Tradition

Much of the transmission of knowledge in San Mateo del Mar is, and has been rooted in oral traditions. For instance, all of the rites, local medicine, fishing techniques, and music practices, have been transmitted orally in the community through generations. Thus, the old generation

becomes the bearer of the traditions, and is given a high status in the society. However, things have started to change in the last ten years.

Additionally, in the practice of 'oral cultures', it is common to find the creation of stories. Storytelling is a very interesting feature of San Mateo del Mar. One of the main representations in the storytelling narrative is the depiction of *nahuales*. In Mexico, *nahual*, an Aztec term, is a common figure sometimes related to the concept of the existence of a parallel animal spirit. Lupo observes that in San Mateo *nahuales* are represented as alter ego images (*ombas*) of powerful forces, having the characteristics of an animal, or of natural agents such as: *müm ncharrek* (Lady wind from the south east); *teat monteok* (Lord Thunder); *ndiük* (horned snake), and others . In *Ombeüts* (local language), they are known as *monbasüik*[12] (men of body-cloud), and it is believed that all *Ikoots* people once had their supernatural powers. All *Ikoots* were *monbasüik*: strong men in the image of the alter ego of *teat monteok* (Lord Thunder) and women in the image of the *müm ncharrek* (Lady Wind from the south east). This nature disappeared when the missionaries from the Catholic doctrine arrived and conferred the blessing with holy water (Lupo 1997: 71).

[12]In the community the term *nahual* is recognized as the translation of the *monbasüik* into Spanish. However, to avoid confusion with the different uses of the term in other parts of Mexico, I will henceforth use the term *monbasüik* when referring to the alter ego images of superpower forces at San Mateo del Mar.

It is interesting to observe that this idea is also present in the oral tradition of *Müm Nihmior Kang* (Lady *Nihmior* stone/female sexual organ). The story says:

> La costumbre dice que antes de que se bautice, el hijo del pueblo dejaba su primogénito a *Müm Nihmior Kang* en el mar abierto que lo llamaban mar vivo. Dicen que después del primogénito, el hijo del pueblo llevaba a bautizar al segundo hijo y así todos sus hijos. Dicen que *Müm Nihmior Kang* emergía de entre las olas y se llevaba de las manos de sus padres a su primogénito. Cuando llegó el cura el empezó a bautizar. Entonces *Müm Nihmior Kang* dijo: - Ustedes se van a olvidar mi nombre, tienen que escribirlo. Y el hijo del pueblo olvidó como se llamaba *Müm Nijmior Kang*. Entonces ella se fue al cerro Cristo y dejó huellas ahí. Todavía hay gente que van a dejarle ofrenda (Esesarte 2005).

> The *costumbre* says that before baptism, the son of the people used to offer his first-born to *Müm Nihmior Kang* in the open sea, the one that used to be called living sea. They say that after the first born, the son of the people used to bring for baptism his second-born and subsequently all of his children. They say that *Müm Nihmior Kang* used to emerge from the waves and take from the hands of the parents their first-born. When the priest arrived, he started to baptize. Then *Müm Nihmior Kang* said: -You will eventually forget my name; you have to write it down. And the son of the people forgot the name of *Müm Nihmior Kang*. Therefore, she went to the Cerro Cristo and left her footprints there. To this day there are still people that go there to bring offerings (Esesarte 2005; translation into English by the author)

The content of this oral tradition, like the element presented by Lupo, might suggest that when the Catholic doctrine arrived, some of the previous tradition and knowledge disappeared. Furthermore, it might suggest a reference to a location of a center of devotion for previous practices. In fact, on the top of the Cerro Cristo, one of the hills close to San Mateo on the east side in the Superior Lagoon, there is a cave with an ancient petroglyph portraying two hands and a face. Apparently, many people from all the Huave towns that still make pilgrimages to put offerings in the cave. Roberto Zarate, an archaeologist from INAH Oaxaca, has performed a survey in the cave. The findings related to the dating and origins of the petroglyph have not been published yet. (Roberto Zarate 2005, personal communication).

In San Mateo, much of the narrative of the storytelling reveals some connections to the practices in the music. There is even a dance and music montage of a story, which is traditionally performed in the Corpus Christi by the *monhiür das* (snake dancers), one of the 'ceremonial groups'[13]. This montage, known as 'the story of *Teat Monteok'*, is about an old man whose *monbasüik* is the thunder. The old man defeats a woman whose *monbasüik* is the *ndiük* (horned-snake) by cutting her head off. Thus doing, *Teat Monteok* saves the town from an inundation.

In the *Ikoots* mythology, the image of the woman whose alter ego is the horned-snake is associated with strong winds, cyclones and floods.

[13] For details on the ceremonial groups see Chapter IV.

The character of the elder is related to the power of thunder and an alter ego image of great strength, being the protector of the *Ikoots* people. Thus, by portraying this rite, the belief states that the town will be protected by the *teat monteok* from floods caused by the *monbasüik ndiük*. It is interesting to observe that this rite is performed only at the Corpus Christi, when the rainy season starts. Lupo argues that the fight of *teat monteok* and *ndiük* is a representation of past inundations that commonly occurred at the end of the rainy season. The memory of these disasters has been kept alive through oral traditions (Lupo 1997).

The image of *teat monteok* is a powerful *monbasüik* figure inside and outside the community. During 2003-2005, I had the opportunity to participate in the Chontalpa Highlands Archaeological Project (CHAP), directed by Danny Zborover. In this project, I was responsible for collecting and analysing the ethnographic data. While collecting oral traditions, Zborover interviewed a twelve-year-old boy who told him a story he had heard from his grandfather about a conflict between *nahuals* from San Mateo del Mar and Santa Maria Zapotitlan. The story says:

> There was a land disputes between Zapotitlan and San Matias (Petacaltepec), and San Matias went to talk with the "nahuales" of the Huave village of San Mateo del Mar, to destroy Zapotitlan... The nahuales threw lightings at the church, but these only hit a stone that stood there. And then the nahuales from Zapotitlan went to San Mateo, and caused a flood. San Mateo people asked Zapotitlan to take their

nahuales, and this is how the dispute ended (Márquez 2003; translated and transcribed by Danny Zborover).

Zborover is trying to relate this oral tradition with archaeological and historical evidence of conflicts and land disputes between the Chontal from Oaxaca, where perhaps San Mateo del Mar played a role (Zborover personal communication 2003). It is interesting to see that many elements depicting the *nahuales* in these oral traditions from Santa Maria Zapotitlan –a Chontal community in the highlands of Oaxaca – portray elements from the *Ikoots* mythology. The "lighting" thrown might be related to *teat monteok,* while the "floods" might reflect the attacks from the *ndiük* related to inundations; not forgetting that it is a belief that the *monbasüik* and the clouds of rain originate in the mountains (Lupo 1997)

The representations of the *monbasüik* in the oral traditions portray characteristics of natural agents, which are part of the ecosystem that surrounds the *Ikoots* people from San Mateo. The thunder, the water, and the winds, are definitely aspects that influence the course of their lives. This group of deities are recognized and identified not only inside San Mateo, but in other towns in the area as well (the elements in the oral tradition from Santa Maria Zapotitlan). This might suggest that the construction of this mythology has been carried out in the practicing of rituals for a long time. For the elements combined in the descriptions of these deities, their attributes might suggest their exclusion from the pantheon of the Catholic doctrine.

The powerful images of these *monbasüik* are represented in the 'ceremonial groups': maliens/malinches and montsünd naab. Thus, the concept of the instrumentation and the special clothing of the maliens/malinches point to attributes from these groups. Furthermore, the practice of the rosary prayer, although mostly structured under the practices of the Catholic doctrine, has an underlying intention that reflects the desire of the community to have enough water.

By observing the content of oral traditions, their representation, and the music performances in the rituals, concepts of different beliefs are unveiled. In the case presented here, the complex group of rituals in the mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin proceed in a specific order to worship the Virgin, part of the Catholic doctrine heritage. Still, within the activities of the worship, many of the rituals portray the other practices that are based on different beliefs that deal with natural agents, suggesting non-Catholic features.

All the musical performances (as it will be shown in Chapters IV and V) are a different expression of this combination of beliefs, which as I will be arguing in the following chapters, are already part of the same practice. These performances in the mayordomía are expressions of religiosity that serve the same purpose: to worship the Virgin Candelaria. Still, it is interesting to observe that each of the performance groups portrays different cultural traits.

Traditions and "Indigenous Identity": the Inside Discourse of Ikoots Identity and the Outside Portrait of the National Identity in Mexico

When asking among the community what the traditional music of San Mateo is, all of the interviewees pointed to the music performed at the festivities. In fact, the 'ceremonial groups' *montsünd naab/opang poh*, *monhiür maliens/malinches* and *monhiür das* have been representing San Mateo del Mar in festivals and cultural events in Mexico and abroad. The ceremonial groups, however, are not the only groups who perform music in the town. Zepna Digital is a group that plays music for dance parties. There is also the village band lead by Arturo Camacho. Arturo is a trumpet player who works as a performer in some Mexican village bands (*bandas de pueblo*) around the area. Still, none of these have been representing the community as an ethnic group.

Identity Discourse and a Proposed Paradigm for the Analysis

Some of *Ikoots* from San Mateo have obtained degrees at Universities, many of who are part of the body of the *Ayuntamiento Municipal*. Among this group, the discourse on Huave identity has also been elaborated. Part of their intention is to maintain the language and another part has been to try to maintain the cultural heritage of the community.

Some of their purposes have been to incorporate bilingual education from kindergarten through to high school. Similarly, they have been supporting youth groups and creating spaces for the practice of traditional weaving, cuisine, music and *danza*. Part of this initiative is "*La Casa del Pueblo*" (communal house), an entity that engages all of the cultural practices, providing rehearsal space for the ceremonial groups as well as storage facilities for the groups' instruments. These instruments themselves are considered sacred and are placed in an altar located at the *Casa del Pueblo* (Fig. 16).

There is a great interest among the authorities to preserve the traditions in San Mateo and encourage the new generation to learn about them. They have created workshops for weaving, as well as for music and dancing taught by the ceremonial groups. This identification with their ethnic affiliation and the traditions might suggest a tight relationship with the indigenous identity. Still, none of these has been maintained for a long time, since there are not many young *Ikoots* interested in learning the practices.

Therefore, concerning the musical performances, there are two factors that suggest the construction of ethnic identity in San Mateo del Mar. On one side is the fact that the 'ceremonial groups' are representing the *Ikoots* as one of the ethnic groups from Mexico. On the other is the elaboration of the discourse on the indigenous identity by the intellectuals inside the community (evident in the manner they attempt to preserve the

traditions). Both of these are indicators that might point to the general concept of multiculturalism in Mexico at large.

The Mexican National Identity and Mexican Multiculturalism

Some Historical Background

Between the period of 1920 and 1940, Mexican society experienced big changes as compared to the previous twenty years. During the 1920s and 30s, the process of urbanization, the development of big cities, and political stabilization (especially with the presidency of Lázaro Cardenas between 1936-1940), contributed to the reformation of Mexican society. The major process of urbanization took place during the 1930s, although until the very end of Lázaro Cardenas' term, Mexico was still not considered an urban country. The influence of a 'modern society' (which came with the growth of urban centers) caused major repercussions in the country at large. The most dramatic changes seem to have taken place in rural areas, with engine transportation, electric lighting, running water, paved roads, and urban re-designs of small plazas in the towns (Mayer et al. 1999).

During the 1930s there was a large growth in the arts such as literature, music, poetry, photography, and painting. Names such as

Silvestre Revueltas, Xavier Villaurrutia, Carlos Pellicer, Salvador Novo, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, Frida Kahlo, María Izquierdo, Tina Modotti, Manuel y Lola Álvarez Bravo (Mas de cien años de cine mexicano 2004), constituted the artistic and intellectual milieu of modern Mexico. These artists and intellectuals were influenced by the ideologies of revolution, taking inspiration mainly from the Russian Revolution (1917) as well as the Mexican Revolution (1910) itself, which became common themes in their works.

Much of the political ideology of this time was immersed in the ideals of socialism and revolution. As part of this social idealism, the government itself supported artists to offer their art to all of the social spheres (Meyer 1999). The requirement was that the works be focused on Mexican subjects. Thus, murals and sculptures were commisioned all throughout the cities, and especially in Mexico City. One of the best examples are the murals painted by Diego Rivera in the Palacio Nacional, in which the history of Mexico is depicted in scenes that go back to Pre-colonial times.

Larraín (2000) argues that social identity is constructed in a social process and proposes three essential elements to identify its construction. First, the collective context shapes the individual identity. Thus, in order to define their identity, individuals have to identify with common characteristics such as "language, religion, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality" (2000: 24); second, material culture produced by

individuals projects their identity; and third, the congregation of individuals with similar characteristics in a common geographical place. In this recognition of identity constructed by these elements, the interesting issue that Larraín points out is that in the construction of an identity, individuals need to recognize themselves in the community that surrounds them: "in other words, the construction of identity is an intersubjective process of mutual recognition" (Larraín 2000: 27). However, for the maintenance of identity there is also a process of struggle to be recognized by others.

Within Mexican society, it is possible to see that the construction of identity during the 1920s through to the 1940s was a process of common social struggle after the *Porfiriato* and the Mexican Revolution. The hierarchical system was changing and the valorization of 'what can be defined as Mexican' became the emblem of the new Mexican nationality. Integration was one of the tools used to attempt to create this new Mexican identity. The rural became an icon of Mexicanism, while art, movies, and the mariachi bring all of these concepts to the general public in order to show the cultural diversity of this society. Thus, a new identity was constructed during this social process.

However, in all this integration, in most parts of this ideal Mexico, the indigenous communities still represented an odd expression. Mexican society struggles to represent the indigenous population and incorporate them into the modern system. Through the process of attempting to recognize the indigenous population, there are many festivals which

portray indigenous clothing, music, dance and food. But, how many of these performances have been recreated to fulfill a need in the big market to sell Mexican culture as an attraction for tourism rather than really representing the nature of cultural practices from the indigenous communities?

The Problematics of Generalizations

Certainly, the cause of integration in the 'New State' brought parts of the society into the spheres of the developed modern state. However, the indigenous population has always been a part of society that has remained marginalized. Poverty is one of the signs that might suggest the lack of integration in the development of Mexican society at large.

Throughout Mexican history, political and social organizations have been looking to recognize and support the existence of the indigenous population. Many organizations have been created to support the maintenance of the indigenous cultural heritage. For instance, la Coordinadora para el desarrollo de los Pueblos indígenas (CDI), previous called el Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI), and el Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (CONACULTA), among others, are examples of the attempt to preserve indigenous groups and their cultural practices. Nevertheless, the indigenous groups still struggle when confronting the modern world.

In Mexico, there are many communities that have managed to develop an isolated system, completely independent from the political organization of the country. San Mateo del Mar might represent an example of this. As it was shown in Chapter II, the cargo system was for a long time the manner in which San Mateo based its political organization. The natural resources provided the necessary income for the community to survive.

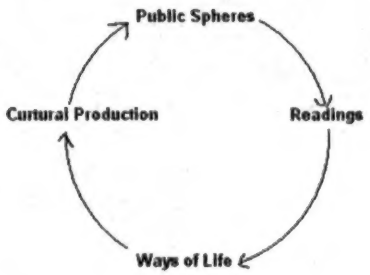
In the last ten years, they built a road that connects the community with the main systems of roads that lead to the big urban centers from the area. This has brought many changes to the community. On one hand the influences from outside, such as computers, clothing, etc, have been introduced. On the other hand, more people leave the town to work outside. The young generations are also more involved in education and are not interested in practicing the old traditions anymore. In today's San Mateo, more *Ikoots* have contact with the world outside of the community. All the changes that the society is going through are visible in the practices of the traditional music.

A Proposed Model for the Elaboration of the National Identities, and the Indigenous Icon in Mexico

Larraín (2002) suggests that national identities subsist in cultural polarities. On one pole they exist in the 'public sphere', elaborated by "intellectuals, universities, media, and research centers". On the other pole, they exist in the 'personal subjectivity' which represents the individual's creation of his own identity, rooted in feelings, practices, and ways of life, which are not always well represented in the public sphere. While the former has the ability to create a discourse based in theoretical analysis of different ways of life, the latter is the practical experience of the reality, lacking the ability to create a discourse in it.

Although the public versions tend to control the concepts and definitions, and classify certain elements that may characterize the national identity, this is just a construction mechanism that may not reflect personal subjectivity. This division between the public and the individual spheres still does not impede an interaction between them.

Elements and characteristics which may represent national identities are a product of a continuous interchange of values. Larraín (2002: 36) reproduces a graphic by Richard Johnson to represent this interaction:



This graphic situates the base of any national identity in the 'Ways of life'. However, the public organisations such as the media, literature, and the educational and political entities, create public versions of the diverse ways of life. This transformed information furthermore will return to affect the renovation of the individual subjectivity through the media, thus closing the circle.

Mexico, like many other countries in Latin American, has a large indigenous population. I will argue that the construction of the National identity through the pubic spheres influences the practices of cultural representations in San Mateo. By presenting the 'ceremonial groups' in the cultural festivals to represent the community, they become icons of indigenous identity. Still, in this process the performers have been unplugged from their cultural and social context, thus becoming different entities.

By presenting a close view of the musical performers, I will argue that the construction of the identity discourse in San Mateo shows influences from the identity construction of the Mexican discourse on national identity and multiculturalism. Furthermore, I will argue that the

costumbre (tradition) is a result of the combination of different beliefs and rituals (Catholic and non-Catholic), which have been validated throughout generations in the continuous ritual praxis. Therefore, by presenting a complete depiction of the events and detailed information about the different groups of musical performers, I intend to bring to focus different elements of syncretic process as well as the representation of many cultural elements and social interactions. At the same time, the representation in many elements of the *costumbre* also reveals issues of indigenous identity, within and outside the community.

Chapter IV: The Mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin

On February 2nd San Mateo del Mar celebrates the mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin. On this date, the often quiet town becomes the focus of merchants, performances, and the endless visits of locals and pilgrims to the images of the Candelaria Virgin located at the church. If we consider that a ritual is an act or ceremony involving a series of performances carried out according to a given order there are indeed many rituals throughout this festivity. In fact, in this celebration everything has to be carry and achieved as close as possible to the *costumbre* (tradition) in order to fulfill the commitment of the community to the Sacred Virgin. Thus, in most of the rituals not only the mayordomos take part, but all the authorities and members of the *Alcaldía, Ayuntamiento Municipal*, and the Church. Moreover, there are different groups that have specific roles in the celebration: a) celebrants: two *miteat poch* (masters of ceremony), one *cambrer* (cohetero[14]) and a *rezador*; b) the musicians for the rituals: *maliens/malinches*, *montsünd naab*)/opang poh, and the Mexican village band; and c) the rosary prayers, a woman choir lead by the church authorities.

It is interesting to note that the celebration of the mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin is translated as a constant desire of the community to make offerings to the Sacred Virgin. Therefore, ceremonies, acts, and

[14] A person who operates the fireworks and other pyrotechnics.

elements presented in the celebration become offerings by constituting the link between the believer and the Virgin. Moreover, the elements of the celebration– as the household altar, candles, and food –are considered blessed/sacred (*nangah*). I shall provide below a narrative in a consecutive manner to present the details I observed (and which I was told), concerning the importance of the offerings throughout the mayordomía, and from there introduce the music, which consists a piece in this diverse network of activities.

In San Mateo del Mar, *mayordomías* are festivities offered to the Virgin, Holy Cross, images of saints, etc, which are all part of the Christian faith. The *mayordomos* are responsible for the arrangements of the celebrations and expenses. The *cofradías* are similar celebrations but with less elaboration. Signorini observed in the in the seventies that *mayordomías* were part of the lower level of the *cargo* system (see Chapter II). It was required to be a *mayordomo* at least three times on the twenty five dates of the festivities of the *Ikoots* liturgical calendar (Signorini 1991: 94). Due to the decrease in the number of festivities in the town, in present times the *mayordomía* no longer represents a requirement to be introduced into the cargo system. Still, there is a communal concern regarding the right celebration of it, in which all the community and authorities take part.

Even though the mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin is a community celebration, *mayordomos* and *capitates* (captains) are the one

principally responsible for all the arrangements for this complex series of procedures, and to cover the main expenses. These consist of couples who generally share the expenses and perform the rituals during the mayordomía. In the mayordomía in which I took part, there were some family disagreements which eventually led them to celebrate apart. Since most of the celebrations present similar course of work for both couples, in what follows there are depictions of the main events of this celebration, mainly considering the mayordomos, and when relevant also the *capitanes*.

There are two spheres in the celebration of this mayordomía: the private one, in which the community of San Mateo is attentive to the different rituals and participate respectively; and the public one, which is offered to the general visitors especially in the last three days of the festivity. Indeed, this mayordomía does not only represent a celebration for the people in the town, but in addition it also embraces many believers who peregrinate to San Mateo to visit the image of the Candelaria Virgin.

In the private sphere, while there are many events related to this mayordomía throughout the year; nevertheless, the central celebration starts at the beginning of the calendar year. On January 8th, all the authorities of the town are being present in the house of the mayordomos. The *miteat poch*, together with other designed members of the celebrants, write the names of the mayordomos in the *nangah* book. The *mayordomos* Fernando Pérez Martínez and his wife Josefina Zepeda, the

mayordoma's father Pascacio Zepeda; and the *rezador* Hipólito Esesarte, come in front of the authorities who hold their command batons, and reaffirm their promise to follow the right rituals for the celebration of the mayordomía. The *Presidente Municipal* proceeds by handing the money, donated by the neighbours, to the mayordomos, and by doing so the celebration has been approved. *Mezcal*[15] is offered all throughout the process. A week later, the elaboration of the candles (*labrada de cera*) takes place.

The candles are central elements in the rite of the offerings. There are two types of candles: the white candles from synthetic wax; and those made with the so called 'Virgin wax' –a type of yellow wax obtained directly from the beehive. While the former is common in many other celebrations in town, the latter is strictly used in this mayordomía. There are seven groups of candles of different length and thickness, and in total about 80 candles (Fig.56; Fig. 58).

The elaboration of the candles is a ritual composed of many procedures. The ceremony starts when the *miteat poch* and the two *cambreres* carefully determine the amount of wax to melt for each group. The amounts are exhibited in a table, and all the authorities and the men present come in front of the wax and bow as a sing of respect. The wax is then deposit in a container located in the middle of the room, which is positioned over a fire. A number of men, starting with the authorities, go

[15] Mezcal is an alcoholic drink produced from the fermentation of agave hearts.

around the melting pot holding a string in order to fabricate the candles. The *miteat poch* drops melted wax on the strings and controls the right thickness of each. After many turns around the candles, the ones that are ready are hung on a strip to dry up. The *opang poh* plays all along this procession, as meat *tamales* (typical for this occasion) are being cooked in a big clay pot (Fig. 52). As is usual in all the activities in San Mateo, to prepare the meat *tamales* the roles of women and men are separated; while the woman make the dough for the tamales, the men tie them up with banana leaves. As part of the ceremony, Mezcal is served all the time for the men, as well as *chaw poposh* (atole with chocolate foam) (Fig. 53). Eventually, the candles together with the flowers are taken to the church by the *mayordoma* as offerings to the Virgin.

During these days, the household altar is set up with images of the Candelaria Virgin, the patron San Mathews, and pictures of a deceased person from the family (Fig. 57). All the household altars I visited faced north, and so does this one. There are different groups of offerings in the altar: in the middle of the table are the sacred candles (*nangah candel*) in a *pag* –a special container made of dried gourd, painted with flowers and covered by a cloth napkin of the typical weaving in San Mateo; on the sides there are flowers and lighted candles. Under the table are the *chaw poposh*, bread, and fruits. While copal incense is burning in front of the altar, the rezador and the women choir sing the chant of the day, with an

antiphonal singing a prayer for the rosary. The Mexican village band (trumpet and two saxophones) accompanies all these prayers.

The Potzo-Angüets

On January 26, the *potzo-angüets* begins and continues until January 30. *Potzo* (bundle)–*angüets* (night) are the five days of the preparation for the eve and day proper of the festivity. Every night of these dates, the rosary is prayed in a procession of the image of the Virgin, mainly around the centre, and always departing from the church and returning to it. The procession is headed by the *montsünd naab*, followed by the village band; then come the authorities of the church and the *rezadores*; a group of woman carry the image of the Candelaria Virgin, preceded by two *monaguillos* who carry two long candlesticks with lighted candles; and finally followed by the entire congregation. The rosary ends when the procession returns back to the church. The bells ring at the beginning when there is a call for the prayers; as well as at the end when the image enters the church again. When this is finished, the *montsünd naab* accompanies the mayordomos to their house, and in the household altar play a group of *sones* which in themselves are called *potzo-angüets*. Mezcal is served to the musicians and to the men who are present in the house-chapel. No women take part in this ritual, only men. Therefore, I was the only woman present in the room.

During these days all the woman and men are involved in many activities, though playing different roles. The women take care of the preparation of large amounts of the typical dishes for the festivity. They prepare the *mole amarillo*, which is a type of soup made with precooked corn, grained with onion, parsley, and *achiote*,[16] served with pieces of meat. They also prepare *chaw poposh* (Fig. 53), and the corn tortillas made in the house oven, which are common in every meal throughout Mexico. The *mole amarillo* is served on the eve of the festivity. Another typical dish of these festivities is the *mole negro*, which is chicken in a sauce prepared from a type of long and wide chilli. The men start to prepare a large banner with the image of the Virgin painted by hand, and ornaments of coloured paper which will be used in the procession of the eve's day during the event know as the '*tirada de frutas*' (throwing of the fruits). A long tent with two stages on the sides is set on the street at the entrance to the *mayordomos'* house.

Start January 29th, the public sphere begins to expand. In the centre of the town, locals and outsiders merchants set up tents for a big fair, to sell images of the Candelaria Virgin, San Mathews, rosaries, and crosses. There are also different types of food, candles, and basil leaves among other displays. This year the *Ayuntamiento Municipal*, looking to create a space to portray the production of different communities from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, opened a small market in one of the schools for

[16] *Achiote* are seeds of annatto tree used as seasoning in food. Annatto grows in the tropical areas of Latin America.

the communities to show their traditional products. This was called an 'indigenous *tianguis*' (indigenous meeting point), in where handicrafts, *mezcal*, *agave*, and other products were brought. Visitors gradually populated the centre, and the centre of San Mateo became a large open market (Fig. 55).

There was also a small music festival in the *tianguis*, in which the communities that took part presented musical performances. From San Mateo, the high school students performed the 'turtle *son*' with an ensemble of the *opang poh* (one reed flute, two drums, and two turtle shells), and a group of dancers. This is an initiative of the young *Ikoots* lead by Hugo Hidalgo, to bring on stage and recreate the traditional music of San Mateo. The group have acquired the instruments with governmental funding, and even have managed to obtain the traditional dress used by women and men before the synthetic textiles were introduced into the community.

On January 31st, in order to perform the *axim candel* (smelling of the candle), the authorities walk in procession from the town centre square towards the *mayordomos'* house, headed by the *montsünd naab* and the village band. Although *axim candel* literally means to smell the candle, it rather corresponds to bow in reverence. When the authorities and the people who have joined the procession enter the house, the *cambrer* lights numerous fireworks. The *nangah candel* (sacred candles) and the banner are already placed in the altar, and from the floor rises smoke of

the burning copal incense. When the audience enters the chapel, they bend in front of the candles and kneel down facing the altar, while the *montsünd naab* stay playing in the entrance. The women who have been preparing the food in the kitchen start serving the *chaw poposh* to the visitors. Afterwards, hot chocolate is served in elaborately shaped cups over a ceramic plate, covered with the cloth napkins from the traditional weaving of San Mateo, and accompanied by round bread on top. In the chapel there was no woman among the men besides myself. They start to talk and make jokes as is usual in social gatherings of the people from San Mateo.

After finishing the hot chocolate, everybody kneels down and one by one start to leave the chapel after bowing in front of the candles. Outside are the elder women who have been waiting for the authorities to leave, so they can enter and pray the rosary. They pray the rosary that corresponds to the day, and the *montsünd naab*, together with the band, accompany the prayer and the chants.

The Eve of the Festivity

The eve, (February 1st) follows with many events throughout the day, and for everybody around it is a long day. From four in the morning, there is an active participation of the family members and neighbours in making all the necessary arrangements for the events to come. The

women are in the kitchen are preparing the food in enormous containers; mole amarillo, mole negro with chile sauce, meat, corn tortillas, everything in large amounts (Fig. 55) The men are busy butchering two cows, and slicing them in small pieces so the women can easily cook the meat.

At the town square, numerous people spend the day buying (candles, flowers, images of saints, rosaries, among others) and continuously visit the image of the Candelaria Virgin, which is placed close to the altar. In the belfry the *montsünd naab* have being playing since the morning (Fig. 32; Fig. 33). For this occasion, Ricardo Carvajal, one of the elder players that had moved to Salina Cruz, has been invited. Traditionally, this ritual group plays all day long in front of the church till the next morning. All the *sones* played during this session are also called *potzo-angüets*.

In the meanwhile, around noon, the *maliens/malinches* start their rite. Forming two lines they depart from the *Casa del Pueblo* in a procession towards the church. They keep quiet and do not make eye contact with the people around. The group of dancers enters the church while the musicians wait at the entrance. They kneel down in silence for a few minutes, then stand up and leave the church in the same order the have entered. This is also the order they keep during their performances.

The malinches/maliens are perhaps the most picturesque performers of all. They have colourfully decorated dress, and their dance at the church's atrium draws the attention of the spectators (Fig. 39). The

dancing lasts for a few hours, and after it is finished, they go and visit the house of the mayordomos, again in a procession in the same order they have been dancing. When they arrive, the *montsünd naab* have already been playing in turns with the village band inside the house, to which the *maliens/malinches* join in with their music and dances. They wait standing outside until the *mayordomo* invites them to come in, and offers them mole *amarillo*, tortillas, and *chaw posh* which are placed in a table specifically designated for the *malinches/maliens*. They proceed to the table and start eating without breaking the order, and without talking. After they finish they leave the house of the mayordomos together, always keeping the order in which they came in silence.

Observing the manner in which the *maliens/malinches* keep the silence throughout the rite, discloses its sense of religiosity. In fact, some of the members have mentioned that in order to have a successful performance, it is important to commit themselves to the rite from the beginning till the end. To do so they have to stay together as a group, and keep the silence from the moment they gather at the *Casa del pueblo,* till they come back to it after the processions (Fig. 49) To be a *maliens/malinche* is to make a sacrifice. Therefore the music and dance of the maliens become offerings presented to the Virgin, integrating the collective desire of the community and mayordomos, as well as personal participation of the performers not only as a group, but as individuals as well.

The banner and the candles are taken to the church, again in a procession lead by the mayordomos, and as with the previous procession, the *montsünd naab* and the village band accompany the procession. The *mayordoma* is the one who carries the candles in the *pang*, and young girls dressed with the traditional outfit of Tehuantepec carry the banner. Also in the procession come the children on horses who will perform the '*tirada de fruta*', from an atrium where they throw fruits and objects (mostly kitchen containers and toys) to the spectators. The Presidente Municipal is waiting at the entrance of the church with an escort, both of which holding their command batons.

The *'tirada de fruta'* and the banner are typical in all the festivities throughout this region. It seems that this is a Zapotec tradition, and many people mentioned that this custom was introduced to the community of San Mateo twenty years ago. After the party in the mayordomos' house is over, the people start to drive themselves to the big dance parties and the fair in the town square, which last during the night. There are two big bands that most of the people go to hear. This dance parties are also part of the program organized by the mayordomos, and their contracts are about 15,000 to 20,000 pesos for performance, which represent an enormous amount for anyone in the town, concerning that most of the basic salaries are around 800 to 1,500 pesos a month, and that there is not much remunerated work in town.

February 2nd, the Festivity for the Candelaria Virgin

In this day the town is even more crowded than in any of the other days. Many more merchants are coming, and congregate at the entrance to the church. From early in the morning more people start to arrive to the church to visit the images, and by then the image of the Virgin Candelaria has already been visited by thousands. Every visitor brings a lighted candle, flowers, and leaves of fresh basil. Many come to touch the Virgin with these offerings, and then touch themselves in the head, face, extremities, breast, and back. Some others bring eggs, and performing the same acts (Fig. 58).

It seems that the people have peregrinated from many places, while some sleep overnight in front of the church to visit the Virgin at this date. I entered the church and stayed close to the mayordomos. The day before the event, the authorities of the church have requested me not to videotape or take any photographs inside the church, thus I was not to able to fully document all the interesting events I observed in this day.

The priest offers a mass in honour of the Virgin, but despite his efforts to control the visitors and try to keep a reasonable silence, almost nobody pays attention. Most of the people are concerned about visiting the image of the Virgin. When the mass ends, the *montsünd naab* start playing many *sons* while sitting in the belfry. Around 4:00pm, the maliens/malinches perform in the atrium for about four hours. Later in the

day the mayordomos offer a party where a lot of food is served, and especially black mole which is the typical dish for this occasion, after which follows a big dance party. At the end of the day, the *mayordomías* is given in a ceremony to next year's new mayordomos (Fig. 60).

February 3rd is the day of 'washing the pots', and 'taking down the coconuts', which means that the festivity is over and all who participated take care of cleaning up together. In this day, everybody gathers in the house of the mayordomos and drink coconut sweet drinks and mezcal. The 'taking down the coconuts' alludes to the fact that in one point in time the tent for the party was made of coconut's palm. In fact, it is still called an 'arbour'. At night there is a party in the town square with two big bands, which is organized by the *capitanes*.

Music Groups in the Rituals of the Mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin

In the above depiction of the mayordomía of the Candelaria Virgin, music is certainly an important element since it accompanies all the central events in the celebration. This can be seen through the *montsünd naab* who head the processions, their presence in the fabrication of the candles, their visit to the house of the mayordomos, and playing during the nights of the *potzo-angüets*. They also perform in the central days of the celebration –eve and day proper— at the atrium of the church. The

performances of the *malinches/maliens* are a special event of the eve and the day proper- the main days of the festivity. The village band accompanies all the potzo-angüets rosary prayers, and plays for a couple of hours at the mayordomos house on the eve and day proper. And finally, although within the community the rosary is not consider music, all that is performed are responsorial chants sung by the church authorities and alternated by the women's choir.

In these series of rituals offered to the Candelaria Virgin, it is evident that music has an important place. As music being a tradition in San Mateo, a close view on the music groups might unfold different issues concerning different cultural influences, social interactions, and might even reflect the stage of this society as it confronts modernity and tradition.

The Malinches/maliens

The malinches/maliens are probably the most colourful group of all. It includes one violin, two military band drums of different sizes, and a group of 12 dancers who accompany the music with rattles (Fig. 42; Fig. 43). All the members are men, and it is the only group that has specific attire for the performances. This consists of a hat made of bird feathers, with a mirror and cluster of coins in front; an embroidered scarf that covers the shoulders, from which three long strips (two red and one green) hang on the back; white shirts, black pants; and black shoes. Because of the

high temperatures, the people in San Mateo use "guaraches", a type of sandals very common in Mexico which are sometimes made of old tires or of leather. However, when the malinches perform each of them wears black shoes, which might suggest that this is part of the outfit (Fig. 46).

All of these are attributes that connect the maliens/malinches with the *Ikoots* mythology. It seems that the maliens/malinches represent the figure of *teat monteok*, and the entire clothing have attributes to identify this deity. The hat and the mirror are references to the thunder, while the colors of pants, shirt, embroidered scarf and the long strips, make reference to natural elements, such as soil and various animals (Fig. 40). The dancer, besides the rattles, also carry a red staff called the *nemehmeay* ('blower' or 'fan'), which is believed to represent the wind (Fig. 45). The red and green strips (Fig. 49) are also present in the clothing of the *monhiür wüx cawüy* (horse knights), who only perform in the festivities of the Corpus Christi (Francisco Zepeda 2006; Severo Villaseñor 2006; Hugo Hidalgo 2006)

This is a miscellaneous group of members of different ages, somewhere between 12 and 74 years old. It is quite common to see different generations of the same family committed to the malinches. For instance, one of the drum players, Roberto Edison Herran, is 22 years old and the second generation of *maliens/malinches* in his family. His father, one of the dancers, is still currently a performer. The two violin players are Jose Villasana Mendoza and Severo Villaseñor. Severo, 74 years old, is

the oldest member of the group and the only one who knows all the melodies (Fig. 44). One of the young members is Hugo Hidalgo, who at the moment of research was 17 years old, has been in the group since he was nine years old. He commented that being a malinche represent part of his culture and heritage (Fig. 47).

The *maliens/malinches* is one of the 'ceremonial groups' which traditionally have been performing in the festivities of the community. To become a malinche represents, perhaps more than anything else, a sacrifice of the group members for the community as part of their civil and religious duties, as well as an act of devotion for the sacred entities. The members were enrolled since their childhood in a ceremony that represented the commitment of the members to the malinches for life. After the ceremony, in case someone gave up their mind, they will be requested to take responsibility of one of the *mayordomías*.

This group is the only one that incorporates young members. However, it seems that their enrolment did not involve all the ceremonial traditions which the rest of the members had to go through. The young members mention that one of the requirements is to attend all the activities of the *maliens/malinches* as a group (Fig. 48). These include rehearsals, performances, and ritual gatherings. However, for the young members it is difficult to commit to all of these, since they have school schedules that cannot be cancelled. This was also the reason not to take

part of the ceremony that traditionally has been performed for the initiation.

While I was in San Mateo (August 2006), I witnessed a discussion about performing in the festivity of San Mateo on September 22nd. The issue was that the young members have not been coming regularly to the practices, since they needed to attend school. Hugo Hidalgo mentioned to me that times have changed, and for those elder members who take the decisions, there is nothing more important than coming to practice. However, at the moment school represents a central part of the lives of the young generations, and their schedules could not allow them to attend these practices. It seems that this argument was the reason to restrict the performances to only those who have followed all the traditions among the *maliens*.

Hugo Hidalgo mentioned that he believes that these types of regulations are out of date in today's society. For the older generations, their schedules were commonly established around the activities of the town. However, many people of the young generation study in different schools, making it difficult to find a convenient time that would fit in all of their schedules. School requires a lot of time and effort and there is not much free time in which to take part in all the activities that the *maliens/malinches* may have in their youth. Hidalgo proposes that the regulations need to be changed accordingly to suit this new reality and

take into account factors such as school schedules and other activities (Hugo Hidalgo 2006 personal communication).

Nevertheless, the authorities of the maliens/malinches incorporated young members into the group and let them perform in the festivities of the patron as well as at the mayordomía of the Candelaria Virgin in 2005 and 2006.

The instruments they use have been in the community for a long time. Severo mentioned that the violin he plays belonged to the elder from whom he learned to play more than 50 years ago.

The Montsünd Naab/Opang Poh

This ensemble is formed by a reed flute and two drums of different sizes; the *opang poh* is the same ensemble plus two turtle shells (Fig. 33). Unlike the drums used in the malinches ensemble, these drums are made of wood carved from the *guanacaste* tree (a type of tree from the area, commonly used in carpentry) and are covered with skin, generally of deer or lamb. In the town, there are two flute players: Apolinar Figueroa and Estevan Echeverría. However, Ricardo Carvajal, who used to live in San Mateo but moved to Salina Cruz twenty years ago, is the one that knows the music best. Among all of the groups, this one has been representing San Mateo del Mar in many cultural, musical and folkloric festivals. They even once traveled to the United States to perform in a festival of

indigenous music. They have already adopted the name 'The Seven Seas' as their moniker when performing outside the town. All the members are adults and elders as there are no young *Ikoots* involved in the practice.

The Rosary Worshipers

The rosary is a tradition of the Catholic Church that consists of a set of prayers followed by the recitation of a sequence of one Lord's Prayer and ten Hail Mary. This sequence is called *decade* and it is recited for every Mystery. Most of the rosaries are divided into three main Mysteries –Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious –each containing a set of five mysteries, thus totalling fifteen. Typically, there is some singing at the end. In general, the Rosary Mysteries refer to the Holy Trinity and the Virgin Mary, with each mystery making a description of the process of incarnation of Jesus until his crucifixion. The Catholics believe that when praying the rosary, the believer is asking God and the Virgin Mary for a favour. In exchange the believer offers the rosary.

In San Mateo del Mar, the prayer of the rosary is a common practice on many occasions: in the morning prayers around 3:00am; during the *mayordomías* and saint festivities; and at the mortuary vigil, among others. Much of the rosary is performed as a responsorial chant lead by the church authorities (Maestro de Capilla, Fiscal and Sacristan), sometimes including the rezadores, and answered by a female choir

(generally elders and adults). Even though much of the rosary is sung, the people that perform it are not considered musicians by the rest of the community. Neither is the chanting even considered music. All of that which is part of the rosary is regarded as prayers. The authorities and *rezadores* are the ones who lead the prayers and no other man can be part of this group, while in the female choir, any woman can become a member.

Even though most of the women in the choir are adults and elders, there is still an initiative to teach the chants and prayers to the new generation. Hipólito Esesarte, one of the rezadores, has been teaching a group of young girls and gradually trying to incorporate them into the morning prayers. In fact, this was the only time I saw young girls involved in the rosary prayer. In the mortuary vigil and the festivities, only the elders perform.

The order and steps for the rosary are delineated in copies of books that have been duplicated by hand by church members. These books also contain a number of chants classified by the occasion. Even though there are complete guides for all of the lyrics for the chants, it seems there is no written music. Rather, the melodies are remembered by the members of the church. Hipólito Esesarte mentioned that he learned the prayers and the melodies when he was a *monaguillo* (Esesarte 2006).

When I started learning, Hipólito gave me a photocopy of a pamphlet with no cover. In the middle section, called 'Misterios en Verso',

there is a title that reads, "Sacado del libro que compuso el P. Fr. Alonso de Rivera, Predicador general del Sagrado Orden de Nuestro Padre Domingo"[17] (Rosary: 20). Still, there is no publication date. Hipólito has mentioned that when he became a *monaguillo* when he was five or six, his father took him to the church and left him there. He is now 65 (Esesarte 2006). This leads me to the conclusion that the practice was established by the Dominicans in the 16th century, since historically, the community did not have a priest until the Oblates came with missionaries in the 1960s. The current priest, Father Jose Alberto Ghiglia from the Oblates order, has mentioned that the morning prayers of the rosary and the manner in which their practice is carried out, comes from the breviaries, which are no longer practiced.

Among the church members, Hipólito is in charge of teaching the prayers to women interested in becoming members of the female choir for the rosary, as well as training the *monaguillos*. Learning the rosary with Hipólito helped me to better identify the melodies, since the throat singing in the women's performance sometimes made it difficult for me to trace the pitches of the melodies. When Hipólito teaches the rosary, he makes copies of the words from small pamphlets. He meets often with students, as much as twice or three times a week, to sing the melodies and repeat them. At any given time, there are three to five students, none of them regular, who attempt to learn.

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[17]Taken from the book composed by P. Fr. Alonso de Rivera, General Preacher from the Sacred Order from our Father Domingo.

The Village Band

The village band is a common feature throughout rural Mexico. In San Mateo, it has almost become extinct as many of the members have already passed away. The trumpet player Arturo Camacho is the leader of the band. On some occasions, he performs with one additional trumpet and an alto saxophone; and on others, with two saxophones (baritone, and alto) and a small drum (Fig. 51). This is the only group that is remunerated in the festivity. Arturo's son, who is 22 years old, performs as a percussionist. He is the only young person involved in this performance.

Chapter V: The music idiom

All the music performed (rosary prayers, *montsünd naab/opang poh*, village band and malinches/maliens) along the *mayordomía* belongs to the *costumbre* –a tradition which has been kept through generations and is validated in the continuous ritual praxis. Interestingly enough, every one of them has a specific role in the ceremony, not belonging to any hierarchical order. Each one has a very characteristic musical idiom.

The Rosary Prayers

Generally speaking, in San Mateo the practice of the rosary follows the same structure of the set of fifteen Mysteries and the prayer sequence of *decades* characteristic of the Catholic practice. Nevertheless, following this they continue with a section of the 'Mysteries in verse'. All of these are performed in antiphonal chants between the female choir and the leaders, with different melodies for each Mystery. There is still some of the text that has been kept in Latin, and the antiphonal chant is very distinctive.

The structure of the rosary is as follows:

	Performers Rezadores and female choir	Rosary Structure	Different melodies in the different Mysteries		
			Joyful Mysteries (Mondays and Thursdays)	Sorrowful Mysteries (Tuesdays and Fridays)	Glorious Mysteries (Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday)
1		To cross themselves			
2	Rezador	Acto de contricción			
3	"	Prayer			
4		Glorify the Father			
5	Rezador reads the mystery that corresponds to the day.	1st Mystery of the day			
6	Rezadores and female choir	Antiphonal Chant: Virgen Divino Sagrario.	Specific melody for the mystery	Specific melody for the mystery	Specific melody for the mystery
7	Responsori Prayer between the rezadores and the female choir	Decade: one Lord's Prayer and ten Hail Mary.			
8	Rezadores and female choir	Antiphonal Chant: 1st Mystery in Verse			
9	Responsori Prayer between the rezadores and the female choir	Decade: one Lord's Prayer and ten Hail Mary			
10	Rezadores and female choir	Antiphonal Chant: 2nd Mystery in Verse	Specific melody for the mystery	Specific melody for the mystery	Specific melody for the mystery
11	Rezadores and female choir	Same as 1st and 2nd Mysteries in verse combined with decades continues in 3rd and 4th, with same melody	Specific melody for the mystery	Specific melody for the mystery	Specific melody for the mystery
12	Rezadores and female choir	Antiphonal chant: 5th Mystery in Verse			
13	Responsori Prayer between the rezadores and the female choir	Decade: one Lord's Prayer and ten Hail Mary			

14	Rezadores and female choir	Antiphonal Canticle: Virgen Soberano Erario	Specific melody for the mystery	Specific melody for the mystery	Specific melody for the mystery
15	Rezador reads the Mystery that corresponds to the day.	5th Mystery			
16	Rezador reads	Offerings			
17	Responsorial Prayer between the rezadores and the female choir	Salutation			
18	rezador	Prayer: Hail Holly Queen			
19	rezador	Salutation			
20	rezador	Glorify the father...			
21	rezador	Prayer			
22	rezadores and female choir	Responsorial Chant: Litany includes Kyrie eleison	Same melody as the others	Same melody as the others	Same melody as the others
23	rezador	Prayer in Latin			
24	Rezadores and female choir	Hymns and Praise songs			

Table 1: Structure of the Rosary Performed in San Mateo

Table 1 contains all of the stages the community follows while praying the rosary. Antiphonal chants are performed with different melodies for each mystery. The Hymns and Praise songs from the end of the rosary are monodic melodies always sung in Spanish and generally in double meter and slow tempo. The repertoire for the hymns and Praise songs is vast. Although many of these songs are no longer practiced, all of them have been compiled in hand-written books. Most of the melodies from the Antiphonal chant are also monodic and are performed in slow tempo, mostly in double meter and with some prolongations on the bit. These prolongations produce an effect as it was performed *ad libitum*, meaning that sometimes the performers lose the tempo. This is

maintained in every performance, suggesting then that it is not accidental, but rather intentional. In all of the chants, the singing of the women has an interesting guttural sound. The *rezadores*, (including the Church authorities), have small notebooks that contain all of the prayers, while the women perform without any written reference.

As I have already mentioned, in addition to the morning prayers, the rosary is performed on many other occasions: within the *mayordomía*, or mortuary vigils. During the *potzo-angüets,* the village band and the *montsünd naab* join the prayers with set pieces of their repertoires that pertain specifically to the celebration of this feast. Most of the rosary structure is maintained during the prayers and processions, but also additional hymns and praise chants are performed with the accompaniment of the village band and *montsünd naab*. During the processions, all of the community participated.

The music from the procession in the potzo-angüets is:

- Hymn to the Patron San Mathews. This is played at the beginning before the people cross themselves (before n. 1, Table 1)
- Virgen Soberana, veneration chant performed after the first Mystery (instead of n. 6, Table 1).
- There is the prayer of the Litany (before n. 7, 2006).

- 'Dios de Salve Maria', a veneration chant that accompanies the procession while leaving the church. This song is performed in all of the five stations they make to pray the Mystery of the day (n.7, Table 1)
- Hymn Virgen Soberana (instead of n.8, Table 1)
- Litany/ Santa Maria/ Agnus Dei (n. 23, Table1)
- Praise Chant (n. 23, Table 1)
- Sta Diosisis en la iglesia (n. 24, Table 1)
- Hymn Santa Maria Estela, this is the hymn for the Candelaria Virgin[18] (played at the end as n. 24, Table 1).

None of the members in San Mateo have knowledge of the source of this practice. It has been transmitted through generations among the members of the Church and belongs to the *costumbre*, as do the other religious practices. All of the books, most of them hand-written, are very important and are jealously guarded by those who are in charge of Church duties. In fact, in previous times, the members of the Church were practically the only ones that learned how to read and write in order to understand the proper use of the books.

Father José Alberto Ghiglia, from the Oblates Order, has been the official priest in the community for the last four years. He mentioned that the type of prayers from the morning rosary resemble the old practice of

[18] The names of the hymns provided by Antonio Camacho, the trumpet player and village band leader.

the Dominican friars, which are part of the Breviary. Furthermore, he said that it is interesting to observe that even though these are Catholic practices, examples such as the guttural singing from the women choir demonstrate the representation and adaptation of these practices to the indigenous environment (Ghiglia 2006). Considering Ghiglia's suggestions, a brief historical overview of the structure of the Breviary might help to determine the historical source of this practice.

A Historical Note on the Rosary

It seems that St. Dominic, the founder of the Dominican Order, institutionalized the practice of the rosary, also know as the Roman Breviary, in the area of Toulouse in the 13th century (Thurston 2003). Therefore, the rosary represented an important practice for the Dominicans and was a concept they certainly brought to the New World when they arrived during the 16th century.

This Roman Breviary, from the Latin *Breviarium,* has a long history of Liturgical transformations starting in the early Middle Ages. However, the closest to what is practiced today belongs to the eleventh century. This is itself a compendium that contains all of the canonical office divided into four parts that represent the seasons, which themselves contain different sections: 1) Psalter; 2) Proper of the Season; 3) Proper of the Saints; 4) Common; and 5) certain special Offices. Also, there are specific

hours in which they are practiced: Prime (6 A.M.), Terce (9:00 A.M.), Sext (noon), None (3:00 P.M.), Vespers (6:00 P.M), and the night Vigils. These Vigils again are divided into Matins and Lauds, with specific hours of prayers. For Matins, the prayers are at 9:00 at night, midnight and 3:00 A. M., while Lauds are prayers for the dawn. Generally, all the parts of the Breviary are a combination of: a) psalms (with some canticles); 2) antiphons; 3)responsorial 4)hymns 5)lessons 6) vesicles 7) little chapters; and 8) prayers (Thurston 2003).

In the case of San Mateo del Mar, the part from the Breviary that could match the morning rosary here is the Matins of 3:00am. In fact, the structure of the rosary that is performed in San Mateo follows the same structure as the matins prayers in which psalms are introduced by antiphonal chants, followed by responsorial verses and hymns combined with reading texts.

However, at the moment I have not found an exact parallel for the Roman Breviary that matches the rosary from San Mateo, especially a parallel concerning the chanting. I looked through old archives in Oaxaca, like the Burgoa Library at the old Dominican Monastery, as well as in archives at the University of Alberta. Even though I do not have explicit proof, the similarity to the Matins from 3:00 A.M. might suggest that these practices have been in the community since the arrival of the Dominicans to the area. For further investigation, I hope in the future to find copies of the Breviaries that were used by Dominicans during their evangelization in

San Mateo in order to trace back the practices of the Dominicans to the sixteenth century. There is no doubt that the rosary prayers belong to the Catholic doctrine. Still, it is interesting to note that the antiphonal chants have been preserved for five hundred years as oral traditions.

The Village Band

For the processions of the rosary in the potzo-angüets, the village band was comprised of two trumpets and a tenor saxophone. For the reception party on February 1st, they had one trumpet, two saxophones (alto and tenor) and two military drums (a bass drum and a small drum). Antonio Camacho is the leader of the band. He learned to play the trumpet from Calicso Fiallo Victoria, a trumpet player who is an elder who no longer performs (Camacho 2006).

Traditionally, the village band has been part of the celebrations as have the other groups. They have accompanied the festivities for the saints, and funerals. However, in recent years they have started to charge by the hour for their performances, thus becoming the only group of performers who are paid in San Mateo. Antonio reads music and in fact, he has being transcribing some of the music from the village band repertoire, as well as bringing and introducing music from other places to play in the festivities. He is currently a professional trumpet player and regularly performs with different village bands in the area.

The repertoire performed at the reception parties on Feb. 1st and 2nd at the mayordomos' house included a combination of: regional *sones,*[19] such as Jarabe Tehuano and La Petrona, which are typical of the Tehuantepec isthmus; as well as polkas like Visiones de Gloria; and Ojos Negros, among others.[20] Generally these pieces are dances in double meter and middle tempo.

Still, the music that the village band plays in the rosary and the procession is unique to San Mateo. Much like the other practices, Antonio has mentioned that the music has been transmitted orally through generations. The repertoire for the village band is vast and much of it is no longer played since there are now fewer festivities in the community. Still, there are pieces that, according to Camacho, are very distinctly from San Mateo. For example, in the procession of the rosary at the *potzo-angüets*, there are two characteristic pieces: the hymn for the Patron San Mathews and Ave Maria, the latter being the hymn for the Candelaria Virgin[21] (Camacho 2006). Camacho has mention that in the past the community had a complete band, but the members started to die and nobody was interested in learning the music anymore (Camacho 2006).

The musical repertoire of the village band is generally monodic even if there is more than one melodic instrument performing. The pieces from the repertoire while accompanying the rosary prayers, are generally

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[19] Spanish term that refers to a piece of music. In San Mateo this term refers to all of the repertoire from the montsünd naab, opang poh and maliens/malinches.
[20] Antonio Camacho identified the pieces from the author's audio recordings.
[21] See details on the rosary procession in the potzo-angüets above

in double meter and slow tempo while the pieces from the receptions are in triple meter and are little bit faster than the other repertoire. The repertoire of the village band is part of the Oaxaca *sones*, known as 'regional *sones*' common to the area, which has Spanish influences as other types of *sones* in Mexico.

The regional *sones* are a typical music of Mexico and are distinctive in each region. For example, there are the Huastecan and Jarocho *son* (which are similar) from the area of Veracruz, and the Huasteca son from Jalisco, Michoacan, among others. These are typically performed with strings (different types of local guitars), and danced by *zapateado*, a type of tap dancing related to Spanish practices, especially the *fandango*. The fandango is a Spanish dance *zapateado* of triple meter (3/4, 6/8) and fast tempo which is typically constructed with a refrain.

In Oaxaca, son is performed with two types of ensembles. One is the village band, which includes wind instruments (trumpets, saxophones, clarinets), drums of different sizes, and cymbals. The sones are in triple meter and normally the band performs in the town's parties and mayordomías, etc. These sones are dances that are performed while women in colourful dress dance.

The other ensemble is a group of marimbas. This ensemble is typical of Tehuantepec and the area of Chiapas. These sones are also in triple meter. It is common to see couples go and dance once or twice a week in the central square of Tehuantepec city. The city of Tehuantepec

itself is credited for famous sones that became national hymns, such as La Llorona and other types of Sandungas, which are generally based on the same style of triple meter sones.

Montsünd-Naab[22]

The repertoire of the *montsünd naab* is as large as in the other groups and similar, many of them are not performed since some of the celebrations are no longer practiced.

The repertoire at the mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin is:

- Potzo-angüets – this is a group of numerous *sones* performed throughout the five days before the festivity day, as well as throughout the entire day and night of the festivity's eve.

Sones played on Feb. 1st at the mayordomos' house

- Son de sinsonte (*son* of the mocking bird)
- Son de la cigueña (*son* of the stork)
- Son without name
- Mi son aunichech (I have no translation for this)
- Son de la danza (Son of the *danza*)
- Paseo de danza (*danza* parade)

[22] The *sones'* names have been identified by Ricardo Carvajal from the author's audio recordings

- Son de gavilan (Son of the hawk)

Seven *sones* (the number 8 is an extra piece that it seems does not belong to this group) called "Horse *sones*" were also performed at the mayordomos' house as well as during the different activities of that day:

1. Paseo en corral en la Casa del Capitan para la iglesia (Walk in corral at the hose of the mayordomos)
2. La llamada (the call)
3. El corral grande (The big corral)
4. La llamada (the call)
5. Cruzado (crossed)
6. Dejada la ofrenda de flor en la iglesia (Leaving a flower offering in the church)
7. tirada de frutas (throw the fruits)
8. Para ir a dejar al mayordomo. (To walk home from the mayordom). This is an extra piece out of the seven.

The ensemble of the *montsünd-naab* is the one that performed all of the music, while the *opang poh* was present only in the *labrada de cera* (elaborating the candle) at the beginning of January 2006. In fact, Apolinar Figueroa and Ricardo Carvajal have mentioned that the *opang poh* is not part of this festivity as this ensemble belongs to the rainy season (Carvajal

2006; Figueroa 2006). The ensemble was introduced into the mayordomía because it was invited by the mayordomos in order to make the ceremony more special. The opang poh also performed at the house of the Capitanes on many occasions for the same reason as mentioned above.

Millán has pointed out that the ceremony cycle of the opang poh starts with the four Fridays of the Catholic Lent, including the festivity of the Green Cross, and ending with the celebration of the Corpus Christi. This period does not include the mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin. He argues that the opang poh become attributes of the mayordomos or the Green Cross, which are placed in the household altars, thus becoming ceremonial belongings of the mayordomos. In all these celebrations, the opang poh has ceremonial attributes, evident in their participation on the rites. (Millán 2003)

Instruments

The instruments are constructed by the performers. The reeds for the flutes are brought from the closest mountains and the wood for the drums is the same as the guanacaste (type of tree from the area) for the drums. The drums are painted with blue; however I did not find any information concerning the colour used to paint the drums. It would not be a surprise to find that the blue colour has water or sky connotations.

There are two types of flutes used which are of different sizes: a big one with six holes in the front and one in the back; and a smaller one with two holes in the front and one in the back. Most of the flutes I saw were pretty much the same size: the bigger one being 29 to 30 cm in length and 1cm in diameter; and the smaller being 27cm long and 0.50cm in diameter. On the top of the flutes there is an embouchure shaped by a cut in the reed at an angle of 45 degrees. The top aperture is covered with beeswax, leaving a small aperture for air. About 1 to 2cm away from the embouchure, there is a square cut in the front part: the bottom of the flute is the division of the reed in which there is a small aperture (Fig.39)

Music

The repertoire is mostly in triple meter (3/4 and 6/8) with syncopated figurations and hemiolas produced among the different lines of the rhythms maintained by the drums or turtle shells. Generally, the smaller flute is used more with melodies that, in some cases, are constructed with only three sounds. The music has been taught from one player to another throughout generations, and has been performed primarily in the festivities context. However, lately the group has been representing San Mateo del Mar in many cultural and ethnic festivals and in some cases, the performances have become a source of economic income.

Ricardo Carvajal has mentioned that when he was young and started to play, there were a lot of people that knew how to play the flute and remembered the melodies. –"It was nothing like now" –he said. At the moment, the municipality is interested in maintaining the tradition of playing and has paid Ricardo several times to teach other people to play the flute. Thanks to this initiative, Apolinar Figueroa started playing the flute around seven years ago. Estevan Echeverría has also been learning. Although he does not play the melodies properly, according to Ricardo, he started to come to the performances.

Ricardo mentioned that the quality of the melodies depends on the ability of the player to hear the melodies properly. He said that he remembers all of the melodies because he has a good musical ear. He learned to play from his father-in-law when he was around 20 years old. He used to listen to him play until he realized that he remembered the melodies. Then one day he started to play with no interest in joining the players in the festivities until his father-in-law started to bring him to the performances. He himself constructs the flutes and taught Apolinar how to choose the right reed and to make the proper embouchure and holes. Still, he complains that Apolinar does not construct the flutes as they are supposed to be. Ricardo has no concept of acoustics. His reference is the position of his fingers and hands on the flute, and the melodies. Still, he mentions that sometimes the sound is not clean or clear, explaining that

this is because the holes are in the wrong place. According to him, this is what differentiates a good flute from a bad one (Carvajal 2006).

Ricardo is perhaps the only one of his generation that remembers more melodies than anybody else. Ricardo considers it important to play the melodies with accuracy. Nevertheless, as far as I can tell, there are variations between the melodies played by Apolinar Figueroa, Ricardo Carvajal and Estevan Echeverría. But to the audience I interviewed, it does not make any difference.

He said that there are many repertoires that he is not ready to teach to Apolinar since his work has not been properly recognized. Currently there is not one young man interested in learning the flute. Ricardo has been teaching for a long time, but mentions that the young generations are not ready to commit to becoming a player. For him, most people right now look forward only to making money and are not interested in playing just for the sake of it, as he has been doing for all these years. Furthermore, he mentioned that the young generations are committed to other duties. Therefore playing the flute in the festivities does not constitute a priority as it did for many of the elder players in the past.

Ricardo is now 82 and he is considering no longer attending the festivities because it costs him a great deal of money to participate in the ceremonies; moreover he becomes very drunk due to the large amount of mezcal he drinks during the celebrations. He mentioned that drinking goes hand in hand with playing and, even though for many occasions he has

been trying to avoid mezcal, he eventually gives in to the celebratory lure of the beverage. Mezcal is an important element of the celebration, he mentioned. It is part of the ritual (Carvajal 2006).

Ricardo Carvajal no longer lives in San Mateo. He and his family moved to Salina Cruz nearly twenty years ago. Therefore, Apolinar Figueroa and Estevan Echeverría performed and accompanied all the rituals of the mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin. Ricardo Carvajal came for the eve and the day proper to play all throughout the day and night.

Eugenio Platas was the master for many years but passed away not long ago. Still, around San Mateo he is remembered as the master of the flute. Ricardo has mentioned that Eugenio Platas knew the entire repertoire of the celebrations very well and that there was some music that he himself does not know. It disappears when Eugenio Platas passed away.

Every festivity and every event in each festivity has a specific series of sones, and these sones are numerous. Ricardo has mentioned to me that there are more than 100 sones, but nobody besides himself is acquainted with the entire repertoire. He has been trying to teach somebody in San Mateo but, according to him, this undertaking has been without success. My guess is that this is also a sign of the change in society. Perhaps in the process of maintaining the traditions, the melodies are recreated in order to fulfill the need for music. It is not as important to

remember each note of the melodies precisely as it is to remember the general idea of what the music sounds like.

The Malinches/Maliens

There are 16 *sones* that are performed on the day before any festivity at the atrium in front of the church. They are divided into two groups of 8 sones each called *termos*.[23]

The Eve of the Festivity

Termo Seguido (Continued Termo):

1. Mison mimüm küt (mermaid 's *son*)
2. Mison trabil (taravilla's *son* –this is a typical bird in the area).
3. Mison ngotnüt (coralillo' *son* –small snake very poisonous typical from the tropical areas of Central and South America).
4. Mison nas (jackal' *son*)
5. Mison wear (algaraban' *son*) I have no translation for it.

[23] The names were provided by Hugo Hidalgo, Severo Villaseñor and Juan Hurtado, malinches/maliens members. Translation from the Huave into Spanish by Hugo Hidalgo; translation from Spanish into English by the author.

6. Mison tsox (heron' *son*)
7. Mison müen (hare ' *son*)
8. Mison künch (jaiba' *son* –type of crab)

After finishing this group of *sones*, the malinches/maliens start performing the *korrül son*:

Natang Korrül Son (Mayor Corrido *Sones*)

1. Mison ngotnüt (coralillo[24]'s *son*)
2. Mison nengochay mingwet apajaran one's (taconazo's *son* –to hit heels)
3. Mison nelitlit ombeay keik (golden beak's *son*)
4. Mison müm Magdalena (Magdalena's *son*)
5. Mison mixey mol (peacock's *son*)
6. Mison ndiük (snake's *son*)
7. Mison jiiüts ongwiiüts (cricket's *son*)
8. Mison lüw (Little spotted cat's *son*)

[24] Type of tropical snake.

For this performance, they also perform 16 sones in two different phases

Termo Revuelto (Mixed Termo)

1. Mison koy	(rabbit's son
2. Mison miük	(butterfly's *son*)
3. Mison kantspiiüts	(calandra's *son*)
4. Mison xii	(zenzontle's *son* –tropical bird)
5. Mison pey	(knight bird's *son*)
6. Mison netsam kit	(hawk's *son*)
7. Mison cheeb	(shark's *son*)
8. Mison xey	(turkey's *son*)

The other 8 *sones* are:

Chingüy Korrül Son (Minor Corrido Sones)

1. Mison netsajyay ombas ran kang	(precious pearl's son)
2. Mison nakants chiüp ombas miteat kit	(red rooster's son)
3. Mison ngwiiün	(squirrel's son)
4. Mison wind	(carey turtle's son)

5. Mison mipalom ndek	(seagull's son)
6. Mison mikeik iünd	(swallow's son)
7. Mison nangaj okas	(Start's son)
8. Mison palom	(dove's *son*)

After they finish the performance, they go to the church and execute the traditional ritual on bent knees. Then they ask for fertility on the land and in the sea, and for harmonious life, saying: "que si les presta vida dios, estarán danzando en otra festividad que se aproxime" (if God lends them life, they will be dancing in the next festivity) (Hidalgo 2006).

All the *sones* make references to animals and especially to birds. Juan Hurtado, one of the lead dancers, has mentioned that the maliens/malinches represent the animals in the sky, the sea and the land that are happy because the rain is coming. All of the movements and rattles indicate this happiness. Most of the dancing happens in two rows, sometimes among four dancers in the same row. Regarding the dancing between four, he mentioned that:

> What the four do in the sea is to enjoy, play and become happy because Teat Monteok will come with clouds and winds to irrigate the land. That is why they are happy[25] (Hurtado 2005).

[25] Translated from the Huave into Spanish by Jesus Angel Escudo; and from Spanish into English by the author.

In the quotation, Hurtado makes reference to Teat Monteok, who belongs to the mythology of the monbasüik as was shown in Chapter III. Still, when Jesus Escudo did the translation, he referred to him as Lord God. Hurtado and Villaseñor have mentioned that the malinches/maliens were monbasüik once, but that knowledge was lost.

Music idiom

All the *sones* from the maliens/malinches are monophonic major scales in double and triple meter, performed by the violin. There are no lyrics and the rhythm is accompanied by the drums and rattles of the dancers. The *malinches/maliens* music and the dance come together. Thus, the rhythm is adjusted to the movements of the dancers.

Some thoughts about the repertoire

The repertoire of these groups is very much related to the religious festivities of the town. In all of them, the members have mentioned that there is a vast repertoire, much of which is not played anymore because some of the traditional festivities no longer exist. This might suggest that the needs of the community have changed as there is no longer a need to perform the rituals as there had been in the past.

Even though the idioms of the various musical practices are different and have specific roles among the practices, together they are part of what constitutes the *costumbre*. There are still performers who carry the knowledge of the previous generations into the new ones. Still, the low enrolment of young *Ikoots* perhaps shows a process in which there is a declining continuity between the generations.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

Through the study of the ritual musical performances of the *Ikoots* people, it is interesting to observe the many social and cultural processes that emerge to the surface. Thus, the male-restricted enrolment in the musical performances of the rituals, makes reference to the civil and religious *cargo* system in which no woman is involved; the different ages of the members involved in the practices, mostly elders, might suggest a transformation of the society; the differences between concepts in the transmission of knowledge (oral transmission vs. school education); the confrontation of traditional vs. modern society; all these factors are present when dealing with the social dynamics among the ritual musical performances in San Mateo del Mar.

Furthermore, in all the rituals that the *Ikoots* maintain, the concept of offerings is evident: flowers and candles at the crosses in the community; the offerings for the deceased; and the festivities for the saints, among other things. In their continuous attempt to maintain the necessary balance with the natural agents, musical performances also become part of the series of offerings, which in this case are for the Virgin Candelaria. As for the open question presented in Chapter III regarding the relationships between the power of the ritual and the power of the music, the answer probably lies in the concept of the *costumbre*. As was

discussed in Chapter III, the *costumbre* represents all the syncretic practices which are the result of the combination of different beliefs, Catholic and non-Catholic. Thus, the music is part of many other rituals which are thought to be effective for maintaining the balance between the natural agents and the normal life of the community, as is evident in their intentions while praying the rosary, or performing throughout the festivity (*maliens/malinches*, *montsünd naab*, and the village band).

In the *costumbre* (the syncretic practices), it is possible to observe (even in the general overview of this study) that the practices reflect the different sources. The rosary prayers are part of the heritage of the Catholic doctrine (left by the Dominicans), while the 'ceremonial groups' (*montsünd naab* and maliens) and their associations to the mythology of the *monbasüik* appear to reflect non-Catholic practices, as does the village band with typical regional *sones* from Oaxaca.

Moreover, the musical idioms are also referents. The chant from the rosary prayers in the binary meter and slow tempo resembles liturgical chant; the triple meter for the *maliens* music is related to the regional Oaxaca *sones*; the village band typically plays the Oaxaca *sones* of triple meter; while the *montsünd naab* is a completely different idiomatic from all the rest, perhaps since it portrays a type of indigenous musical idiom.

The instrumentations of the ensembles might also suggest some features related to this concept. While all of the instruments used in the ensembles are evidently adaptations of European instruments (violin,

brass, drums, etc.), the instruments of the *montsünd naab* are fabricated with local materials. This might suggest that the *montsünd naab* is perhaps the only ensemble that is related to non-Spanish musical traditions. In fact, this type of ensemble is common all throughout Mexico. However, what makes it distinctive is the use of turtle shells as instruments, which is typical in the practices of the *Ikoots* in the area.

Furthermore, these associations are similar to those found in the construction of beliefs. The Virgin Candelaria is associated with the rituals of the rain performed at the end of the dry season. In these rituals, the authorities join in processions bearing images from the church and the sea, and facing southeast to the direction of Bernal Hill, they kneel and ask for the rains to come. It is believed that the *monteok* and *müm ncherrek* live in this hill and that the rain clouds originate there (Lupo 1997: 71). Similarly, the rosary prayers for the rain are performed in the morning. Accounts of the power of these prayers are so renowned that some people from other towns come to San Mateo to ask for rain (Hilario Ballarta 2006). Even inside San Mateo, it is believed that stopping the ceremonial practice will cause the rain will stop (Elias Ochoa 2006).

Therefore, the practice of the rosary reflects the belief that this ritual is as effective as any other ritual that the community has been maintaining throughout generations. In this system there are a number of deities from different religious practices that together become part of one belief – the *costumbre*. Then, in this syncretic practice of the celebration of the

mayordomía for the Candelaria Virgin, *maliens/malinches* and montsünd naab- with representation from *monteoks* and other *monbasüik*- dance and pray in honour of the Virgin while the rosary is prayed in antiphonal liturgical chant to ask for water. The village band accompanies all of them with their typical *sones* from Oaxaca.

Additionally, for the community in San Mateo, tradition is still important for the positive development of ceremonial events. Therefore, a specific order is kept in the celebration of the *mayordomía*, and all who take part in it are committed to fulfill the role that has been assigned to them based on tradition. Knowledge is very important in determining the right performance for the rituals. As was mentioned in Chapter III, most of the knowledge in San Mateo del Mar has been transmitted through oral traditions. Then, the elders who have been carrying the knowledge of the community have been the most respected.

When observing the process of oral transmission among the groups of ritual musical performances, the notable element is that there are only few young people involved. Consequentially, there is a sense of discontinuity of the practices between the generations of performers. While the elders still carry the knowledge of the repertoires, there are almost no members of the younger generations willing to receive this knowledge in the way it has been practiced. Perhaps in the process of confronting modern needs, the younger generations will adapt these practices to their new needs (as was seen in the case of the *maliens*). As

a researcher, it was sad to visit an elder who remembers hundreds of melodies and to think that the repertoire might disappear when the elder passes away. While in the past it was essential to allow the knowledge to be transmitted though the generations for the right performances of the rituals, today the younger generations are more interested in acquiring knowledge from schools in order to take a role in the economical development of the modern Mexican society.

In an effort to maintain traditional practices, the authorities of the *Ayuntamiento Municipal* have created workshops for young *Ikoots* for learning them. This attempt also represents a different concept of approaching these practices. While traditionally they have been taught as part of the communal duty, their function now is more related to a public performance that will represent the *Ikoots* indigenous identity. As discussed above, within the community there is a creation of an identity discourse elaborated by a group of intellectuals who are mainly members of the *Ayuntamiento Municipal*. In this discourse, while introducing the practices into the community by creating the workshops, the ritual musical performances learned are disconnected from their original context and become public performances. This might further suggest an influence from the general concept of representing indigenous identity common in the discourse of Mexican multiculturalism.

In Mexico, the representation of the indigenous communities is generally presented in festivals of music, typical clothing, food, and other

forms. Examples of this are the *Gulaguetza*[26] and the *Guendaliza*[27] from Oaxaca, as well as performances of practices in the big cities, such as the *voladores* ('men-birds') from Pochutla who perform their ritual dance in front of the National Museum of Anthropology and History in Mexico City, mostly during the weekends. In these performances, the practices have been taken out of their context and have acquired a different meaning. For instance, the *voladores* is a ritual, which when taken out of its traditional context, becomes a public performance. In the process of taking a practice out of its original context, other values (e.g. aesthetics or commercialisation) further come into play, which might even bring the practice towards professionalism to fill in the standards. Thus, in this representation of the indigenous identity, a recreation of a genre based in the 'ways of life', has been transformed and recreated through the public spheres (Larraín 2000).

By considering Larraín's idea and applying it to the case of San Mateo del Mar, we see that while the ritual musical performances have been created in the 'ways of life', the 'public sphere' has created a version of these practices that has been introduced again into the community, but with a different connotation. Therefore, in this process the ritual becomes a public performance. An example of this is the recreation of one of the

[26] *Guelaguetza* is an indigenous festival celebrated every year at Oaxaca City. Generally speaking, in this festival all the indigenous communities from the state of Oaxaca bring music and dance groups to represent the community. During this event there are also exhibits of art, food, and handicrafts, produced in the communities which participate in the festival.

[27] Based on the idea of *Guelaguetza* from Oaxaca City, this indigenous festival is celebrated in the city of Tehuantepec. This annual event has similar elements as the other indigenous festivals.

sones with the 'turtle dance' that the young *Ikoots* performed in the indigenous *tianguis* (Chapter IV) (Fig. 37; Fig. 38). While this piece is part of the ritual musical performances, here it has been recreated as a variation of it, and performed in a different context. In this recreation there are other elements that might be seen as taken from the Mexican general representation of the indigenous identity, such as dance and colourful costumes, which originally did not belong to the ritual musical performance at San Mateo. As such, the young *Ikoots* identify with the music as being traditional of San Mateo del Mar, and which will further differentiate the community as a distinct ethnic group within the multicultural Mexican society. I do not intend to imply here that this is a negative process as it has been influenced by canons from outside the community, but rather observe that the adaptation of these practices might suggest a process of transformation, which in itself is valid within the community.

The case presented here may suggest an antagonism between modernity and traditional society, in which members of the younger generation become the principal characters. Nonetheless, the importance and relevance of these types of practices will probably continue to shift between traditional beliefs and the confrontation with the modern world. This will become the new challenge for the generations to come.

Glossary

Spanish Glossary

Alcalde —Head of the *Alcaldía*

Alcaldia —Civil entity, one of the three political powers of San Mateo. This entity is responsible of the control of

atole —hot beverage common in daily meals, commonly consumed on mornings as part of the breakfast.

Ayuntamiento Municipal —one of the three authorities of San Mateo. It is an administrative entity responsible of the management of infrastructure in the town as, constructions of roads, houses, etc; as well as administrations of funds.

Cofradía —Festivities in honor of minor Saints, as Saint Mathews. Same as *mayordomías* but of smaller scale.

costumbre —(tradition). Celebration of festivities along the year.

Church —one of the political power of the community. Their duty is to

danza —dance performance which belongs to religious ritual.

Maestro de Capilla —head of the 'Church' authorities.

mezcal —alcoholic drink distilled from the sap of an agave. It is commonly used in festivities as a sacred drink as part of the rituals.

monaguillo —(altar boy). First stage in the 'Church' system.

mayordomía —festivity offered for the Virgin, Holy Cross, images of saints

mayordomo, a — the person who is in charge of the *mayordomía*.

rezador —all member of the Church system, they are acquainted with all the religious prayers, and performances of rituals among the community. This person is in charge of leading the deceased with prayers in his path and destiny after death.

Sacristan —third in charge among the 'Church' authorities.

son, sones —Spanish term that refer to a piece of music. In San Mateo this term refers to the entire repertoire from the montsünd naab, opang poh and maliens/malinches, and village band.

Ombeüts Glossary

axim candel —(smelling the candle) one of the ceremonies related to the consecration of the sacred candles in which all the authorities come to the house of the mayordomos and render tribute to the candles.

chaw poposh —atole with foam made of chocolate. Ceremonial drink present in all the rituals as offerings (decease, festivities, etc.).

Ikoots —(we) ethnic group from San Mateo del Mar. Huave

miteat poch —Master of ceremonies

monbasüik — (men of body-cloud). Alter ego image of supernatural forces. Parallel representation of *nahuales* in *Ombeüts*

monhiür das —(snake dancers). 'Ceremonial group'.

monhiür maliens —(malinches dancers). 'Ceremonial group'.

monhiür wüx cawüy —(horse knights). 'Ceremonial Group'.

montsünd-naab —(those who play the drum). Group of musicians (drums and reed flute). 'Ceremonial groups'.

müm ncherrek —(Lady wind of the south east). monbasüik of feminine qualities related to the wind of the south. The Candelaria Virgin

nangah —sacred

ndiük —(horned snake) monbasüik of negative connotations related to cyclones, strong winds, and inundations.

nemehmeay —(blower, fan) Red instrument made of wood in the shape of a red small machete carried by the *maliens* in their performances.

omaIndiük —(head of snake). Danza

ombas —alter ego

Ombeüts —local language spoken by the *Ikoots* people. Huave language.

opang poh —(turtle shells). 'Ceremonial Group' of musicians with the same instruments of *montsünd naab*, but in addition two turtle shells.

pang —container made of dried pumpkin painted with flowers.

Potzo-angüets —(*Potzo* –bundle, *angüets* –night) are the five days of the preparation for the eve, and day proper of the festivity. Group of sones from the montsün naab, which are played along the Potzo-angüets.

Teat Monteok —Lord Thunder. *Monbasiük* of positive connotations as the defender or protector of the community.

Topil —nahuatl term meaning 'police man'. The lower stage of a cargo system.

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Appendix 1: Map and Photographs

Geographical Location of San Mateo del Mar, Map

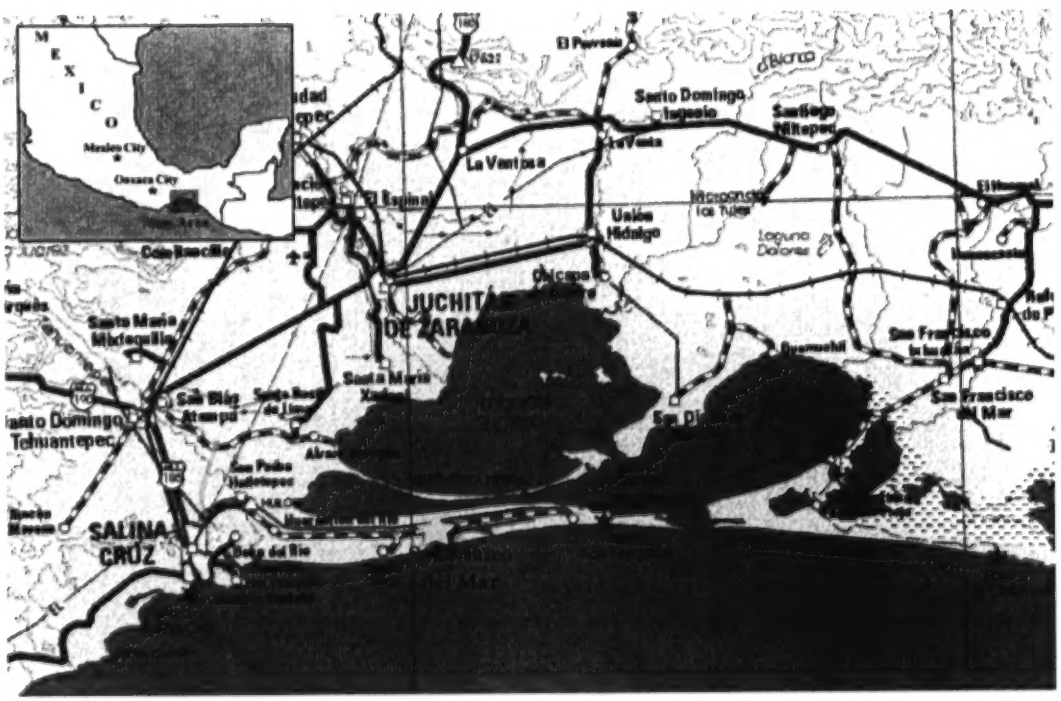

Figure 1: San Mateo del Mar

Figure 2: Ikoots crossing the pools

Figure 3: Pools running east west inside San Mateo

Figure 4: Superior Lagoon

Figure 5: Sunset at Superior Lagoon

Figure 6: Ikoots men making the fishing net

Figure 7: Fishing nets

Figure 8: Ikoots men coming back from fishing routine

Figure 9: Ikoots man herding ships

Figure 10: Ikoots men fishing at the Superior Lagoon

Figure 11: Ikoots man planting sticks to catch fish

Figure 12: Karina, Ana Lilia, Carolina and Johan Zepeda

Figure 13: Hugo Hidalgo and Jesus Escudo

Figure 14: Superior Lagoon

Figure 15: Hill 'Cutting the Head'

In this hill is believed that *monteok* cut off the *ndiük*'s head.

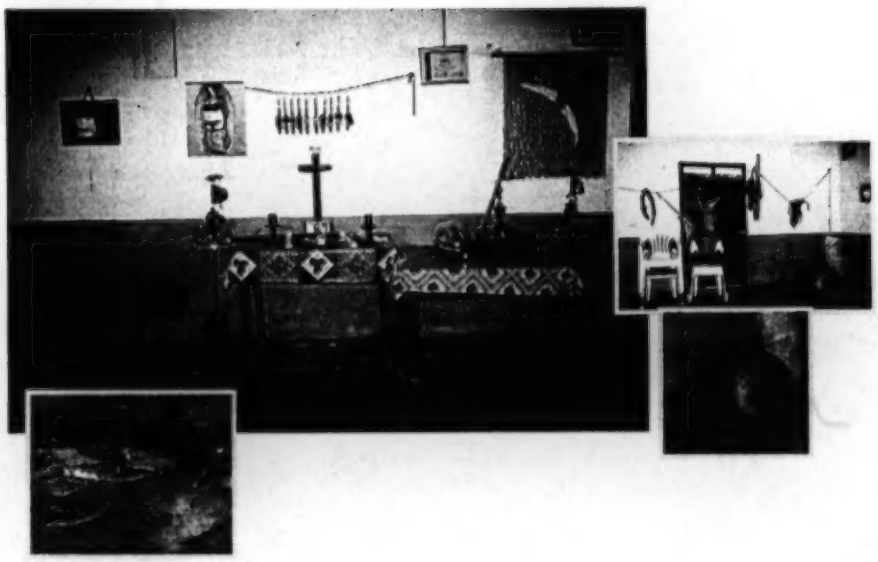

Figure 16: Altar at the Casa del Pueblo.

The photographs on the sides are close ups of the instruments.

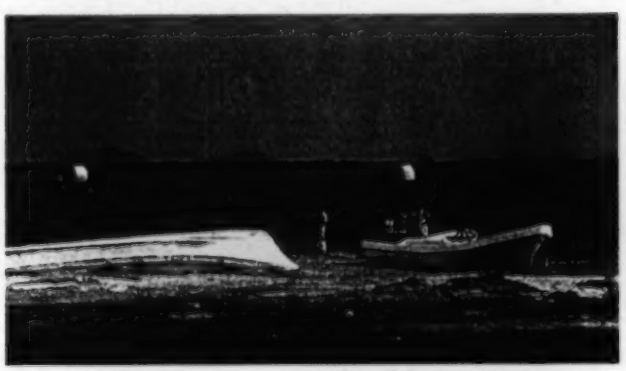

Figure 17: Ikoots from San Mateo and Santa Maria fishing at the Superior Lagoon

The Local Market

Figure 18: Sofia helps Berta Zepeda to dry shrimps

Generally, the shrimps are dried to be carried for selling in the big cities

Figure 19: Berta Zepeda buying shrimps at the local market

Figure 20: Local market

Figure 21: Women sell and buy shrimps at the local market

Weaving

Figure 22: Helena and a piece of weaving

Figure 23: Elena is teaching to Chavela to weave

Figure 24: Chavela is weaving

Figure 25: Elena and her daughter are spinning

Figure 26: Cristina weaves

Figure 27: Elena weaves

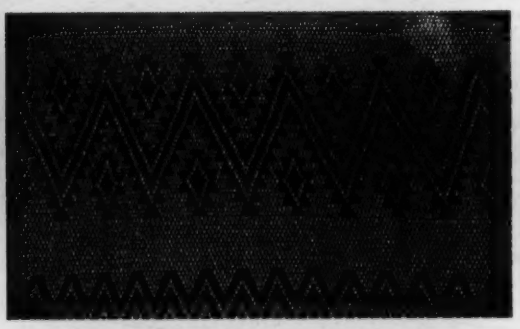

Figure 28: Justina Oviedo is preparing the cotton for spinning

This was the manner to prepare the cotton before the industrial threads were introduced into the community

Figure 29: Theme of the Snake in the weaving

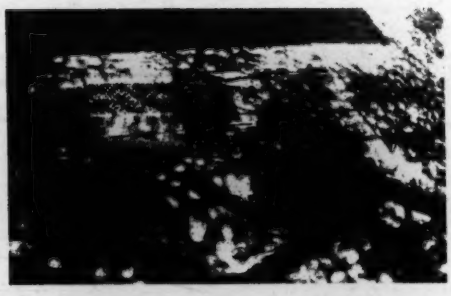

Figure 30: Different styles of weaving.

The one in the left is the famous rounded style designed by Justina Oviedo.

Figure 31: Elena shows a servilleta

Montsünd Naab

Figure 32: Montsünd Naab Performing at the Belfry. Feb. 1st

Figure 33: Montsünd Naab Performing at the Belfry. Feb. 1st

Figure 34: Montsünd Naab performing at the mayordomos' house. Feb. 2nd

Figure 35: Montsünd Naab Performs in the Rosary Processions at the Potzo-Angüets

Figure 36: Montsünd Naab Performs at the House Mayordomo's House

Figure 37: Young Ikoots Practice the 'Turtle Dance'

Figure 38: Hugo Hidalgo Plays the Reed Flute at the 'Turtle Dance'

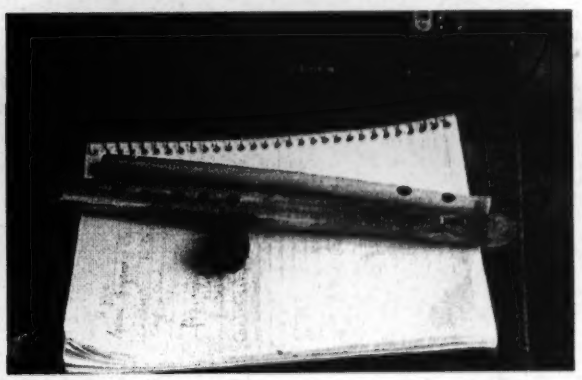

Figure 39: Reed flutes from the montsünd naab

Maliens/Malinches

Figure 40: Maliens performance in front of the atrium. Feb. 1st, 2006

Figure 41: Maliens sharing mezcal during the performance. Feb. 1st, 2006

Figure 42: Maliens perform at the atrium. Feb. 1st

Figure 43: Maliens' instrumentation

Figure 44: Maliens share mezcal during performance

Figure 45: Severo Villaseñor plays the violin

Figure 46: Malien dancer holding the namehmeay

Figure 47: Maliens gather together at the end of the performance, in front of the church

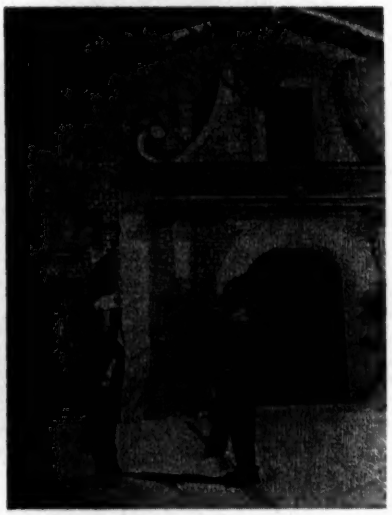

Figure 48: Hugo Hidalgo at his house wearing the maliens' outfit

Figure 49: Young malien attentive to the instructions of the master dancer

Figure 50: Maliens return to the Casa del Pueblo after the performance

Village Band

Figure 51: Village Band performs at the rosary procession during the Potzo-Angüets

Figure 52: Village Band performs at the mayordomos' house

Different Activities During the Festivity

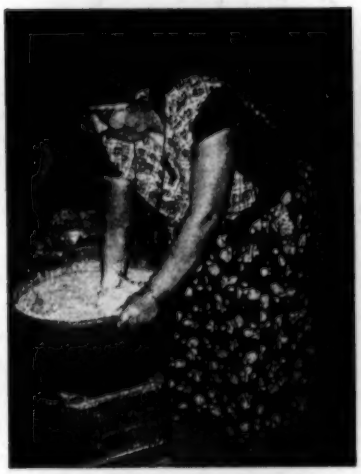

Figure 53: Estela makes tamales

Figure 54: Ikoots woman makes chaw poposh

Figure 55: Ikoots woman cutting meat while preparing food

Figure 56: Ikoots people sell at the entrance of the church during the mayordomía. Feb. 1, 2006

Figure 57: Cambrer decorating the nangah candel

Figure 58: Household altar at the house of the mayordomos

Figure 59: Image of the Candelaria Virgin at the church

Figure 60: The mayordomo Fernando Perez Martínez dancing in the party of Feb.2nd

Figure 61: The mayordomos hand over the mayordomia to the new ones. Feb. 2nd, 2006